



August 31, 2014

1 Samuel 21

*"Dealing with Difficult People"*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

After David killed Goliath, he became a national hero, and people were singing his praises. King Saul became jealous and angry because David had become more popular, more successful, and he had a closer walk with God than he did. These changes in the way Saul was treated and/or perceived by the people created a situation in which Saul became intentional about killing David. So, David ran for his life, and for the next eight to ten years, David would live the life of a man on the run. It's hard to imagine being in the prime of your life and always having to look over your shoulder, going from town to town and never having a place to call home, but that was David's life. And what had he done to deserve the life he was living? Nothing. He killed a giant because no one else would; he became popular, even though he wasn't chasing after popularity; and he was hunted by a jealous, insecure, angry king, for no reason.

We can learn a lot from David at this time in his life, in that, even though he had done nothing wrong, he was able to maintain his composure, self-control, and integrity toward Saul. Sometimes, all it takes is one person or one party to initiate or perpetuate the wrong, and the other person or party hasn't anything to warrant such treatment, and this is was the case with Saul and David. The mistake many people often make when they have been treated as David was, is to react in an inappropriate or ungodly way. And when that happens, the person who reacted inappropriately becomes equally responsible for his or her share of the wrong, because they have just entered into the battle. It's interesting to note that in the face of all of the wrongdoing David suffered through, he refused to be drawn in. David new he couldn't control how others treated him, but he also knew he could control how he reacted/responded to their mistreatment. He maintained his composure, self-control, and integrity toward Saul. He steadfastly refused to return wrong for wrong.

If you are being treated unfairly or facing opposition or being maligned, Pastor Gary's message will help you see how the Lord helped David, as well as gain insight into the ways he wants to help you deal with difficult people.

### David Didn't Return Wrong For Wrong

1. **Romans 12:14** - *"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."*
2. **1 Peter 3:9** - *"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."*
  - a. Peter is telling us that we are called to do the right thing, which is not always the easy thing, because the easy thing would be to repay evil with evil or insult with insult.
  - b. The harder thing to do is to return evil or insult with blessing!
  - c. The result of our obedience to God's Word is that we will *"inherit a blessing."*
  - d. When we do the harder thing - the right thing - by blessing those who mistreat us, God does the greater thing of returning a blessing to us!
3. We need to resist when we are tempted to say, "I don't want a blessing. I want to get even!"

### What Does The Bible Teach?

4. Pastor Gary emphasized the fact that the steps David took, which should be a model to us, do not reflect weakness.
5. He also made it clear that we shouldn't come to the conclusion that the Bible, in general, takes a passive approach to dealing with those who oppose, mistreat, or malign us.
6. What the Bible teaches is often counter to the culture, and our society would dictate that we have need to have a "get even" mindset, because it's okay to stand up for ourselves.
7. Our culture has no problem with lawsuits against any person for any reason, because we've got our rights!
8. Our culture tells us that responding any other way would be weak and cowardly.

9. What the Bible teaches is counter-intuitive, because our instinct is to act or respond in a certain way.
10. One example of the counter-intuitive things Jesus said can be found in [Luke 6:27-31](#), when he said: *“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*
11. The Bible doesn't teach that we should never seek justice, never report a crime, or always let others take advantage of us and treat us like a Christian doormat, all the while, shouting, “Praise Jesus,” when they do.
12. The Bible teaches that the right thing is often the hard thing; and the hard thing is often counter-culture and counter-intuitive, but when we do the right thing, we will honor God and in the end, we will be blessed.

#### David Kept His Distance To Keep The Peace

13. David understood the idea that when you confront an angry bear in the woods, you don't look for a confrontation, you avoid him.
14. Saul was ferocious and unpredictable, so giving him space was a strategy that helped David preserve his life.
15. David did not lack courage, because it was David the teenage shepherd boy who took on Goliath in a face-to-face battle, and it was David who killed lions and bears that attacked the sheep under his care.
16. When someone is bent on killing you, you only have three choices: kill, be killed, or keep moving so you can elude the person who wants to kill you.
17. David discerned that it was better to be a “moving target” than a “sitting duck.”
18. [Proverbs 15:18](#) - *“A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.”*
19. [Proverbs 22:3](#) - *“A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.”*

20. David went to Nob to keep distance between himself and Saul.
- a. **1 Samuel 21:1-3** - *“David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, ‘Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?’ David answered Ahimelech the priest, ‘The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions,’ as for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.’ ”*
  - b. Nob was about one mile north of Jerusalem.
  - c. Unfortunately, Ahimelech’s kind gesture would end up costing him his life, because Saul ordered Doeg the Edomite, to kill Ahimelech and 85 priests!
    - i. **1 Samuel 22:16-22** - *“But the king said, ‘You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father’s whole family.’ Then the king ordered the guards at his side: ‘Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.’ But the king’s officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord. The king then ordered Doeg, ‘You turn and strike down the priests.’ So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep. But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David. He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar: ‘That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father’s whole family.’ ”*
21. David went to Gath to keep distance between himself and Saul.
- a. **1 Samuel 21:10-11** - *“That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, ‘Isn’t this David, the king of the land? Isn’t he the one they sing about in their dances: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’”*
  - b. Gath was about 25 miles southwest of Nob, in territory controlled by the Philistines.
  - c. Gath was the hometown of Goliath.
  - d. Clearly, this was not where David was supposed to be, because he could have been killed for coming to town with Goliath’s sword hanging from his hip!
  - e. **1 Samuel 21:12-15** tells the story of David feigning insanity in order to make good his escape from King Achish.

22. David went to the Cave of Adullam to keep distance between himself and Saul.
- a. **1 Samuel 22:1-4** - *“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him. From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, ‘Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?’ So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.”*
  - b. David wrote **Psalms 57** when he was at the Cave of Adullam.
23. David and his band of 600 men left Adullam and went to the forest of Hereth, which was just outside of the city of Jerusalem, before they made their way to Keilah.
24. According to **1 Samuel 24:1-7**, David and his men made their way south to the region of the Dead Sea, to En Gedi, which means, the “spring of the goats.”

#### David Didn’t Retaliate When He Had The Opportunity

25. **1 Peter 2:23** - *“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”*
26. When you have the opportunity to even the score and get back at someone who has mistreated you, and you do nothing; that takes an enormous amount of self-control.
27. David went one step further, because he actually spoke to Saul and bowed down to him in respect.
- a. **1 Samuel 24:8-10** - *“Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, ‘My lord the king!’ when Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, ‘Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’ ”*

28. Saul was convicted by David's "unusual" behavior toward him.
- a. **1 Samuel 24:16-22** - *"When David finished saying this, Saul asked, 'Is that your voice, David my son?' And he wept aloud. 'You are more righteous than I,' he said. 'You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family.'* So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

#### David Showed Respect Even When Saul Didn't "Deserve" It

29. **1 Samuel 26:6-11** - *"David then asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, 'Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?' 'I'll go with you,' said Abishai. So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him. Abishai said to David, 'Today God has delivered your enemy into our hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice.' But David said to Abishai, 'Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the Lord lives,' he said, 'the Lord himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and let's go.' "*

#### David Trusted God To Deal With Saul

30. God put Saul in a position of authority, and it was God's job to take care of Saul, not David's.
31. David knew first-hand about God's promise that he would be the king of Israel some day, but he refused to hurry-up the process by being disobedient to God.
32. **Romans 12:17-21** - *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's*

*wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'* ”

33. We would do well to allow God to have his way with the person or persons who mistreat us, because we can get in the way of what God wants to do if we try to “even the score”
34. A mindset to “Kill ‘em with kindness” will bring the other person under conviction.
35. **Luke 6:27-36** - “ *‘But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.’* ”

#### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **1 Samuel 21:10-11; 22:1-2; 23:14-18; and 24:1-2** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time talking about the ways difficult people have treated you and how the Lord helped you.
4. Have you ever been tempted to go along with the culture and seek to get even?
5. Why do some people consider David to be weak because he made a decision to keep his distance in order to keep the peace?

6. In what ways have you found that doing the right thing was the hard thing?
7. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they followed the advice of [Romans 12:14](#) and [1 Peter 3:9](#). (See #1 and #2 above)
8. Read and discuss [Proverbs 15:18](#) and [Proverbs 22:3](#).
  - a. What are some of the characteristics of people like the ones described in these Scriptures?
9. Share examples of times when you've shown respect to people who didn't "deserve" it.
10. Read and discuss [1 Samuel 26:6-11](#).
11. How willing are you to follow the old saying, "Let go, and let God"?
12. Read and discuss [Romans 12:17-21](#).
13. How did your "intervention" in a personal conflict hinder what God wanted to do in the other person's life?
14. Read and discuss [Luke 6:27-36](#).
15. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: follow David's example by not returning wrong for wrong; keep their distance, when the Lord leads, in order to keep the peace; show respect when it may not be "deserved"; and trust God to deal with the difficult people in their life.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).