



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Humility or Rivalry of Heart? (I Samuel 16—17)

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Capitol Commission state directors are missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with a heartfelt compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and it is our desire to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come.

With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and as a matter of first importance, to pray for their salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). Our desire is witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.

Introduction

Prior to the actual battle of Michmash, 1 Samuel 13—14 indicates that Saul was rejected as king (see esp. vv. 13-14). Saul's son Jonathan, however, was introduced immediately as his replacement. Similar to Eli's replacement by his "adopted son" Samuel, and as Samuel was replaced by his "adopted son" Saul, so the failed leadership of Saul would result in his replacement. Jonathan's courage and faithfulness to the covenant with God (Deut 28:7) indicates he would be a worthy replacement of Saul. Since the previous leadership replacements have been by an "adopted son," one may begin to wonder if the biological son will indeed replace his father. As the account progresses, it is evident that the biological son will be a preview of the true replacement, David. Although Jonathan prefigured David, the attitudes and actions of David were remarkably similar to Jonathan.

René Girard first proposed the theory that desire is mimetic ("imitative") and is a primary impulse in human motivation. According to Girard's theory, desire is based upon what others desire, especially when such individuals are model examples. For example,

the desire of children may be formed by the desire of their parents. Dad and mom's passion become the passion of their children. The danger with mimetic desire is that a "thing" may be often possessed by only one person, which means that competition will likely result. The greater extent to which one mimics the desire of another will ultimately manifest in the sinful expression of vicious rivalry. Mimetic theory, of course, was not known in Old Testament times; however, Scripture does address the modern theory, when it commands, "you shall not covet" (Exod 20:17). While not either affirming or denying Girard's model of desire, it is interesting with regard to the historical account of Saul, Jonathan, and David because all three men to some extent desired the kingship of Israel.

WE MUST ALSO BE WILLING TO FORSAKE PERSONAL AMBITIONS FOR THE BEST INTEREST OF OTHERS. THE MEANS TO DO SO IS RELIANCE UPON PRAYER AND GOD'S WORD AS THE MEANS OF OUR STRENGTH AND FOUNDATION FOR OUR SUCCESS.

Jonathan's victory (1 Sam 14) demonstrated his potential rivalry to his father because his courage and faithfulness was heroic, whereas Saul was not faithful to God's covenant and consistently disobeyed the Lord. According to 1 Samuel 16:12-13, his "beautiful eyes" and "handsome appearance" introduced David as legitimate rival. God's words to Samuel indicate unequivocally that David was chosen to replace Saul, who certainly became envious of David (18:6-8) and looked upon "David with suspicion" (18:9). David's successes made Saul fearful of him (18:12, 15, 29). Saul eventually became suspicious of his own son as potentially helping David (20:33-34) and blamed him for conspiring against him (22:8). Saul is certainly a "textbook example" with regard to the vicious rivalry of mimetic desire.

Jonathan is a remarkable contrast to his father because he resisted the jealousy and maliciousness of such desires. He rejoiced in David's successes (1 Sam 19:4-5) because he loved David as himself (18:1; 20:17; cf. Lev 19:18; Mark 12:30-31), and even encouraged him to find strength in God (1 Sam 23:16) while his father was seeking his destruction. Jonathan knew David would be the next king over Israel and that Saul would not be able to harm him (23:17). Jonathan became an example of how godly friends can be a tremendous encouragement in times of adversity and hardship. In the words of John 3:30, David must increase, but Jonathan must decrease. Jonathan surrendered his own ambitions for the sake of another. We must also be willing to

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forsake personal ambitions for the best interest of others. The means to do so is reliance upon prayer and God's Word as the means of our strength and foundation for our success.

It is possible to apply these truths even further. Jesus said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it" (Matt 10:37-39). Jesus stated unambiguously that His followers must treasure Him over everyone and everything else. Those who reject the commands of Jesus will find the words of John 3:30 to be unintelligible and impossible because the actions and attitudes it demands are the opposite of natural tendencies. However, when the glory of God becomes our greater ambition in this life and humility characterizes our life, we find our joy increases (John 3:29).

HUMBLE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

(16:1-23) Chapter 16 introduces David as the primary character in the narrative. The only mention of Saul is in relation to the career of David. Saul's fading into the background is the consequence of his disobedience to the word of the Lord (15:22-23; 1 Pet 5:6-7). The events of 1 Samuel 16 provide vital information in the account of God's establishment of the Davidic kingdom and therefore is preparation for the record of 2 Samuel, wherein David's legitimate ascendancy to the throne is provided. Although God already made His choice, it will not be until the events of 2 Samuel that Saul is removed and David procures his rightful position. There is an evident conflict between God's sovereign and holy choice, and the usurper who refuses to abandon his position as king. There are certainly individuals currently in public office who are usurpers, and are fighting to retain their power even though the sovereign Lord has rejected their leadership because they have opposed the living Word and the written Word (Prov 8:15; Dan 2:21; 4:17; John 19:11; Rom 13:1).

SAUL'S FADING INTO THE BACKGROUND IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF THE LORD (15:22-23).

Samuel was overcome with grief over Saul's fate, which warranted God's rebuke so that he would perform His will. Samuel was sent to the home of Jesse to anoint David as the next king. Samuel and Jesse, however, were influenced by the wrong criterion as they sought to discern God's choice. They were more impressed by the physical appearance of Jesse's sons as opposed to the Lord who examines the heart (1 Sam 16:7). When it is time to choose leaders, it is crucial that we are mindful that the most unlikely candidate often possesses the

greatest potential to bring God glory (which is the chief end of all humanity). The same mistake of Jesse and Samuel can be made in choosing a spouse because the physical appearance is not nearly as important as the spiritual potential (Song 1:3-4).

According to verse 14, moments of great depression would come upon Saul because an evil spirit terrorized him. Depression is not always Satanic, but it could be the result of grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30—5:21). David was brought to Saul's court to employ his musical ability to benefit the king. The therapy is effective; "and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him" (16:23). It is noteworthy that David was a loyal and trustworthy servant who used his abilities for the benefit of another. Faithful leaders will use their abilities, skills, and talents for others.

HUMBLE ON BEHALF OF GOD

(17:1-58) The infamous battle with Goliath is recorded in this chapter. David's service of Saul at the court was brief, and at this point he had returned home. While bringing supplies to his brothers from home, he learned that a great threat opposed the armies of Israel. David volunteered to represent Israel in the conquest of Goliath, and he won the famous victory. The lessons herein are threefold.

MAY THE LORD ENABLE YOU TO MAKE HIM FIRST PRIORITY, AND GUIDE YOU TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS FOR HIS GLORY AND YOUR JOY.

David refused to be discouraged by negative opinion. His brother Eliab mocked David's efforts (17:28) and Saul likewise sought to dissuade him (17:32-33), but David was not deterred. Secondly, he knew God's deliverance in less threatening problems (17:34-37). David was convinced that the God who delivered him from the lion and bear would deliver him from Goliath. Moreover, he understood that the foundational issue with the threat was between God and Goliath. Goliath defied and taunted God (17:45-47), and David was cognizant that the Lord would vindicate His own name. Although David used his abilities, skills, and talents with the sling, he was dependent upon God for the victory. God was as much reality as Goliath, which was the reason for David's fearless venture. God honored the faith of David, and granted him the victory.

Saul's failed leadership was the consequence of arrogance and disobedience. God rejected him and removed his power. Whenever a leader rejects God, he or she will be replaced with another. Civil leaders are to seek God's honor and will. When encountering opposition, faithful leaders will be zealous for God's glory. Do you "seek after God's own heart"? Do you believe and trust that "the battle is the LORD's"? May the Lord enable you to make Him first priority, and guide you to accomplish great things for His glory and your joy.