



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Persevere and Faint Not (1 Samuel 26—27)

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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

We are always known by the company we keep. Perhaps motivated by personal gain, the Ziphites approached Saul previously (1 Sam 23:19). The events of 1 Samuel 26 seem to indicate some malignity among the Ziphites, which is also evident in the life of Saul. Perhaps they were envious that the success of David was increasing to the south of them. The security of David is obvious now since he did not avoid Saul. To have assurance and to live with assurance can take time. God assured David of his kingdom, but now David acts based upon that certainty. Nevertheless (as 1 Sam 27 demonstrates), a believer's fainting is often an element for which one does not account, and may culminate in tremendous peril without the grace of God (cf. Eccl 11:1-4; Gal 6:9).

UNAWARENESS MAKES A FOOL

(26:1-25) The beginning of chapter 26 demonstrates the continual envy of Saul toward David. Saul enlisted "three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph" (26:2). Saul's objective was a "seek and

destroy" mission. He camped near Jeshimon (26:3). David sent scouts to identify Saul's location (26:4). When "he knew that Saul was definitely coming," David "came to the place where Saul had camped" and found him asleep (26:5). "Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground at his head" (26:7). David had a second opportunity to kill Saul but refused to harm him because the king was God's anointed (26:9). While David contemplated his potential actions, none of Saul's army awoke because God anaesthetized them (26:12). Although it appeared that David neglected an opportune time to remove his enemy, he simply confessed trust in God's providence (26:10).

David demonstrated his character by not destroying Saul's life. "For who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be without guilt?" (26:9). Abishai did not understand David's actions for it seemed imprudent to risk their lives for a spear and jug of water (26:11). He may have thought that David did not want to be victorious based upon his actions.

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In the morning, "David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance" (26:13). David called to Saul's sleeping army, and when they were awakened, he chided them for not guarding the king (26:15). Saul responded uncharacteristically to David. He admitted his sin and that he had "played the fool" by committing "a serious error" (26:21). Although his foolishness has been evident to us in studying 1 Samuel, and certainly to many of his officers, this is the first time that Saul admitted his folly. The wisehearted recognize a fool, but fools often do not recognize their impoverishment (cf. Prov 11:29; 14:16; 26:1-11; 29:11). Fools are always beginning to live, whereas the wise do in the beginning what the fool does ultimately.

The English aphorist Charles Caleb Colton wisely said, "The mistakes of the fool are known to the world, but not to himself. The mistakes of the wise men are known to himself, but not to the world." Nearly every culture has a proverb that

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confesses the perverseness of a fool. “A fool may be known by six things: anger without cause; speech without profit; change without progress; inquiry without object; putting trust in a stranger; and mistaking foes for friends” (Arabian proverb). “Don’t approach a goat from the front, a horse from the back, or a fool from any side” (Jewish proverb). “A spoon does not know the taste of soup, nor a learned fool the taste of wisdom” (Welsh proverb).

The last words that Saul would speak to David were: “Blessed are you, my son David; you will both accomplish much and surely prevail” (1 Sam 26:25). It would appear that Saul is ultimately confessing that his “seek and destroy” mission has been ineffective and should cease immediately. Rebellion against God is always futile. Sadly, it has taken Saul his entire life to realize this and he will not find true repentance. Although his words must have been a comfort to David, it would have been more assuring of his true feelings, if Saul had invited David to return to court. The fact that he did not indicates he has not truly changed. To seek reconciliation with David would have required an invitation. Indeed, the insincerity of Saul is reason for David’s words in 27:1. David knew he could not trust Saul. How long will Saul resist God’s patience toward him, without realizing that the Lord’s kindness is towards repentance (Rom 2:4)? Saul will certainly face doom if he does not repent for his sin against God.

UNTRUTHFULNESS MAKES A PERIL

(27:1-12) It is intriguing to think what motivated David to flee to the Philistines. Perhaps he was exhausted from Saul’s relentless pursuit of him, and disbelieving Saul’s words, David thought the only relaxation he could experience would be to leave Israelite territory. He was certainly weary from having to ponder the potential for death as the result of Saul’s relentless pursuit. Even though his strength was renewed with each encounter with Saul, the overall effect of the continual pursuit would not dissipate immediately. The increasing impact of Saul’s malignancy had its continual influence upon David. Interaction with the diabolical can have a disabling power.

David was not thinking before he acted. Samuel had already anointed him king of Israel. David had just confessed that the Lord would deliver him from all distress (26:24), but his next action indicates doubt with regard to that protection. David’s reasoning was legitimate in doubting whether Saul would ever cease pursuing him (27:1). However, if Saul were victorious, as David believed possible, it would contradict the promise of God. The challenge for all believers is not simply trusting God’s word for our lives in pleasant times, but also in times of tremendous adversity, even when victory seems impossible. “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts” (Zech 4:6). “With God all things are possible” (Matt

19:26). “Finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. . . . And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph 6:1, 17).

The events of chapter 27 reveal David acting first, and then thinking afterward with regard to the effect of his actions. David’s visit to Achish is different than previously (1 Sam 21:10-15). It was common knowledge that any relationship with Saul was unrealistic; therefore, the Philistines did not regard David as a spy. Moreover, his “six hundred men” would be regarded as mercenaries, and as captain, David would be regarded as a traitor in Israel. Persistent hatred toward David for his victory over Goliath (1 Sam 17) required him to move to Ziklag, a city within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah and given to Simeon (Josh 19:5).

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Regarded as a mercenary captain, David had to maintain this charade and also avoid attacking Israel. Therefore, he and his men “raided the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites,” who were enemies of Judah but not necessarily Philistine enemies. David’s actions in exile (even as a fugitive) demonstrate that he still sought to be effective for the Lord (cf. Judg 2:20-23). He was not truthful though because David claimed to be attacking Israelite settlements, but in reality, he was fighting against traditional enemies of Israel. David’s actions were more than convincing for maintaining his charade than he expected because now Achish wanted him “to fight against Israel” (28:1). Now his kingship over Israel was being gambled. His untruthfulness climaxed into a great peril.

David likely justified his actions by an “if only” fallacy. The promise of God assured David that he would escape from Saul’s mortal pursuit of him, but there was more involved in the will of God than simply being delivered from the distressful experience with Saul. David, however, was thinking “if only” he could be relieved from the situation with Saul, then all else would be well. There is no easy answer for obtaining discernment. Scripture simply commands “trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Prov 3:5-6). The proverb does not say avoid understanding; rather, “do not lean” on it. Lean on the Lord *and* use discernment (cf. 3:7-26). Do not fear a Saul or Achish, but give honor and reverence to the Lord. Rely upon God’s Word to learn and receive wisdom, and trust in God for His might and power to be manifest.