



**Sermon Series:** More Than a Sidekick: Serving Alongside Others

**To be used with Session 3:** David

**Sermon Title Possibilities:** *“No Applause Needed”*; *“Reward without Recognition”*

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 18:5-16

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study, “More Than a Sidekick: Serving Alongside Others,” this sermon will encourage the congregation to serve excellently at all times. Additionally, the congregation will discuss the importance of faithfully serving even when it is unappreciated. By examining the estranged relationship between Saul and David, listeners will expose and discuss the potential challenges of serving in toxic environments while remaining faithful to our God-given assignments. The congregation will also identify and discuss the profound impact of jealousy, envy, resentment, and insecurity in relationships and how those characteristics do great harm. Ultimately, the congregation will leave inspired to serve faithfully because God promises to reward those who serve God.

**Introduction:** On Friday, January 12, 2007, *The Washington Post*<sup>1</sup> conducted an experiment where a man played a violin at about 7:51 am—the peak of morning rush hour. The violinist performed six classical pieces against a bare wall outside the Metro in an indoor arcade. During the performance, an estimated 1,097 people passed by the performer. However, he was hardly acknowledged or celebrated. Those passersby did not know that the performer was Joshua Bell, one of the finest classical musicians in the world, who was playing some of the most intricate classical pieces ever written, on one of the most valuable violins ever made. They did not know that Joshua Bell had just performed at a sold-out venue with \$100 per person base tickets. The Washington Post experiment teaches us that people seldom recognize or appreciate greatness. Moreover, unfortunately, the same is true with faithful service: most people fail to recognize or appreciate faithfulness and excellence. However, in our lesson today, we will be reminded that we are called to serve faithfully, no matter who fails to acknowledge or appreciate us, because we know that our reward comes from God.

## **1. Be Fantastic (1 Samuel 18:5-7)**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/pearls-before-breakfast-can-one-of-the-nations-great-musicians-cut-through-the-fog-of-a-dc-rush-hour-lets-find-out/2014/09/23/8a6d46da-4331-11e4-b47c-f5889e061e5f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/pearls-before-breakfast-can-one-of-the-nations-great-musicians-cut-through-the-fog-of-a-dc-rush-hour-lets-find-out/2014/09/23/8a6d46da-4331-11e4-b47c-f5889e061e5f_story.html)

1 Samuel 18 highlights moments following David's defeat and slaying of the Philistine terrorist Goliath. During that encounter, David courageously defended Israel by battling Goliath and securing the victory for Israel. 1 Samuel 18:5 reports that David's success continued after the showdown. According to verse 5, David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him. David was not only successful, but he was also consistent. No one wants to follow an inconsistent leader. Operating fantastically necessitates consistency. In fact, consistency is the precursor to excellence, which ultimately opens doors of blessings. Consistency is a valued characteristic that God honors and has the potential to unlock favor. David's consistent success caused Saul to entrust him with even more responsibility, elevating him to the position of commander of the army. David's elevation should cause us to ask, "In what areas of our lives have we been consistently successful?" Asking the aforementioned is a necessary moment of reflection that we must engage before petitioning God to add more to our lives. Indeed, our consistent growth and success in small areas pave the way for an increase in our lives. Jesus confirmed this truth when he declared, "You have been faithful over a few things, now I will make you ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:23).

## **2. Be Focused (1 Samuel 18:8-11)**

David's consistent success was not only rewarded by Saul but the people in the community also celebrated it. According to 1 Samuel 18:5-7, David was approved by all the people to the point that women came out of all the towns dancing, playing instruments, and singing the praises of David. Indeed, success has the potential to garner commendation and adoration from the masses. However, we must never become consumed with the praises of people. The euphoria that acclaim releases might be satisfying but can also become toxic. History bears witness to the fact that countless individuals and institutions have fallen due to pride-driven acclamation. Public commendation can also brew jealousy and resentment in others. According to Samuel 18:8, Saul became very angry (*chârah: hot, furious, kindled, burning, heated to vexation*) by the praise that David received. In fact, Saul's anger was so great that he attempted to kill David with a spear while David ministered to him (1 Sam. 18:10-11). However, David remained focused. Similarly, we must remain focused in the face of jealousy. The irony of Saul's jealous anger is that he appointed David and approved David (1 Sam. 18:5). Saul's action is a stark warning that people will praise you today and persecute you tomorrow. Jesus experienced this on the cross when some of the same people who cried, "Hosanna, Hosanna," were quite possibly some of the same people who shouted, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him" (Matt. 21:9). David's focus amidst the response from the people and Saul reminds us that we must learn how to remain focused—unshaken by both commendation and critique if we desire to excel.

## **3. Be Faithful (1 Samuel 18:12-16)**

According to 1 Samuel 18:10-12, Saul's envious anger of David moved to fear. Scripture does not offer any clear evidence of David's actions that would warrant Saul's fear of

David. In fact, the converse is true; scripture suggests that David faithfully served Saul and brought success, security, peace, and prosperity to Saul's kingdom. It would have made better sense for David's faithfulness to draw Saul closer to him. However, that was not the case. Saul's anger and subsequent fear caused him to remove David from his presence (1 Sam.18:13). However, David, even still, remained faithful to Saul. It is unfortunate, but the sad reality is that sometimes people refuse to acknowledge and appreciate our dedication, sacrifices, and faithfulness. The lack of appreciation occurs in families, marriages, businesses, and even in churches. This is why Paul wrote, "whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ." (Col. 3:23-24). David remained faithful to Saul because God assigned him. Consequently, God remained with David, which caused him to experience success in all his undertakings (1Sam.18:14). Sometimes we are called to faithfully serve and love people who do not always love us back, but if we honor God through our faithfulness, then we will experience unfathomable blessings, just like David. Therefore, we must remain faithful, knowing that the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and repay everyone for what he has done (Matt. 16:27).

**Conclusion:** Through this sermon, we have been reminded that often, people fail to acknowledge or appreciate our sacrifices and dedication. Moreover, we are challenged through this sermon to examine our hearts and check our real motives. If we are serving for the applause from humans, disappointment is inevitable; we surely will be let down at some point. We must, therefore, repent and redirect our attention toward God—remembering that God called us and assigned us to the places from which we serve. Ultimately, God has commissioned us to serve faithfully and excellently, no matter the circumstances. Fortunately, we can find rest and strength with God's promise to reward those who faithfully serve God.

### **Author Bio**

Dr. TERRENCE CHANDLER-HARRISON serves as the Lead Pastor of The Liberty Church—Clarksville, TN. He is a graduate of Morehouse College and Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Terrence earned a Doctorate of Education from The University of Southern California and his research was awarded the dissertation of distinction merit. He is a professor of Bible and Theology and Dean at The Historic American Baptist College—Nashville, TN. Terrence and his wife Anjelica are the proud parents of Ellie Grace and Timothy James. Check out Terrence's latest work, *Spiritual Cross Training: The Book of James* on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.