

Refine Women's Ministry  
**Lesson 3: – 1 Samuel 18**  
January 31, 2018 by Kim Peelen

*“Trials are medicines which our gracious and wise physician prescribes, because we need them; and He proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires.” John Newton*

We are studying David before he ascends the throne of Israel; his life is a worthy model to us because he walks *in a manner worthy of the calling - with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:1-3). In 1 Samuel 16, God calls David to replace the current spiritually corrupt King Saul in a dramatic ceremony where Samuel selects, not the eldest of Jesse's sons, but the youngest who is merely a shepherd boy. God searches for a man after His own heart, and finds him in the young man David. Though David returns to shepherding the family flock, God sovereignly assigns him to be in Saul's household as his armor bearer but also as his personal musician. David witnesses the unraveling of Israel's king, but God also uses David's exquisite music as His means to calm Saul during severe bouts of melancholy due to an evil spirit from the LORD.

As 1 Samuel 17 opens, David is both Saul's servant and shepherd and *upon whom the Spirit of the LORD dwells mightily*. Going on his father's errand to check on his brothers in the army, David accepts the challenge of the blasphemous bully, macho-man Goliath to a one-on-one battle because every soldier in the Israelite army is too frightened. Refusing King Saul's cumbersome armor and weapons, David approaches his opponent with a stick, five stones, a sling shot, and unwavering trust in the LORD to defend His glorious name. It is not that David is on a fool's errand to confront the ferocious foe dangerously under-protected. Rather, David understands that the battle is between this uncircumcised Philistine and the LORD of hosts, whose name the giant insults by his irreverent taunts: *“you come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.”* The Spirit of the LORD emboldens David to declare, *“This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly [the Israelites need to learn this as well] that LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into **our** hands.”* And the Spirit of the LORD fulfills every detail David describes. David's humble, steadfast trust in God and not in himself wins a tremendous victory for Israel that day.

### **With All Gentleness or Consideration**

#### **Saul Summons David: 1 Samuel 17: 57-58**

*So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner [Saul's uncle and commander of the army] took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?” And David answered, “I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”*

Saul has not inquired about David's background until he defeats Goliath and is a national hero, even though he plays harp for him. Rather than being offended by this slight, David answers the king. This meeting also introduces Saul's son Jonathan into David's life.

## **David Prospers in Friendship with Jonathan: 1 Samuel 18:1-5**

*Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants [omits mention of Saul's opinion of David here].*

Saul's heir and eldest son Jonathan loves David and makes a solemn binding agreement with Him. In a covenant, two become one and are responsible for one another. When Jonathan gives David his personal garments and weapons, it symbolizes the oneness Jonathan has with David. As the king's son, Jonathan is the greater and makes the covenant to David, who is the lesser as the king's armor bearer. David takes center stage in this chapter as he obeys orders, receives promotion over soldiers, and others take notice of his excellent character.

## **Saul's Suspicion over David's Prosperity: 1 Samuel 18: 7-9**

*The woman sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.*

Saul's character is consistent; rather than rejoicing that David defeats their enemies, he is afraid that David's renown will threaten his position as king (exactly what God intends). Saul's displeasure grows to anger and constant suspicion of the prospering David. However, David continues to serve the king as his harpist and other people notice his uprightness.

## **Saul Has Evil Spirit; David Has The LORD: 1 Samuel 18: 10 -15**

*Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand; and a spear was in Saul's hand. Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him. When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him.*

Surprising that David continues to play his harp after the first spear attack. Because of fear, Saul cannot bear to even see David so promotes him to commander of even more men in battle [hoping he'll die?], which expands David's influence and renown among the people.

## **Saul Baits David; David Continues to Prosper: 1 Samuel 18: 16 - 29**

*But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them. Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let*

*the hand of the Philistines be against him.” But David said to Saul, “Who am I, and what is my life or my father’s family in Israel, that I should be the king’s son-in-law?”*

Saul offers Merab in marriage on the condition that David will fight valiantly against the enemy for her. Because David is NOT killed as he attacks the enemy, Saul inflicts insult to David by giving her to another man at the last minute. Then, Saul encourages his other daughter Michal’s love for David in order to require a dowry price of 100 Philistine foreskins that this time will surely get him killed. But no, David presents double the requirement.

*When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king’s son-in-law. Before the days had expired [to fulfill the dowry], David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife. When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David’s enemy continually.*

### **David Eclipses Saul in Battle and Character: 1Samuel 18:30**

*Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.*

Saul’s soul battles with an evil spirit and he dramatically succumbs to consuming suspicion, anger, and fear, even plotting to murder his faithful servant! In contrast, David continues to obey the king’s commands to play his harp, to go battle, and to provide a dowry for (2) wives even as Saul throws spears at him! The same young man who confronts the blasphemous Philistine giant because he offends the LORD of hosts, consistently sets his heart to love and trust the living God. The Spirit of the LORD has indeed come upon David mightily and prospers his way.

### **In groups use Overview of The Psalms Handout to discuss Psalm 4**

Remember the Psalms are poetry set to music, songs to sing

Title: *To the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David*

1. To which Book of Psalms does this belong:

Book 1 (1-41; Genesis); Book 2 (42 – 72; Exodus); Book 3 (73-89; Leviticus);  
Book 4 (90 – 106; Numbers); or Book 5 (107-150; Deuteronomy)

2. To which book of the Pentateuch does it correlate [Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy]? Therefore, what is the Psalm’s general theme?

3. What else do you learn from the descriptive title?

Psalm 4:1 *Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!*  
*Thou hast relieved me in my distress;*  
*Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.*

4. What does David request? From whom?

Psalm 4:2, 3: *O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach?*  
*How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception?*  
*[Selah. – likely means pause in the music]*  
*But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself;*  
*The LORD hears when I call to Him.*

5. Who does David address now? How does he rebuke them?

Psalm 4:4,5: *Tremble, and do not sin;*  
*Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. [Selah.]*  
*Offer the sacrifices of righteousness;*  
*And trust in the LORD.*

6. David's rebuttal to them includes doing what?

Psalm 4:6-8: *Many are saying, "Who will show us any good?"*  
*Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, O LORD!*  
*Thou hast put gladness in my heart,*  
*More than when their grain and new wine abound.*  
*In peace I will both lie down and sleep,*  
***For Thou alone, O LORD, dost make me to dwell in safety.***

7. Followers of David ask if following him will result in good. David's response is to appeal to God for what?

8. What does God give David in response to his prayer?

9. Before David's circumstances change, how does David's spirit change?

10. To what does David attribute his change from fear to genuine peace?

11. Before your circumstances change, what truth about God can transform your spirit of anxiety, fear, or uncertainty to one filled with calmness, joy, assurance?

**Summary of Psalm 4: In the midst of persecution, David calls upon God for relief, asking the LORD to bring repentance to his enemies and divine favor to his supporters.\***

In David's short psalm, he requests God for relief in the midst of persecution, not based on his goodness or achievement, but on God's perfect righteousness granted to him by faith. He then rebukes his enemies for evil, glory-seeking motives that undermine his leadership and oppose the LORD. However, David also pleads for these enemies to fear the Lord in true worship and then turn away from their sinful attacks against him. Finally, even David's men are questioning the situation of following him. David requests God to direct His divine favor toward them and grant them relief. Before his circumstances change, David puts his trust in the LORD and God transforms his fearful, anxious spirit to one of joyful, genuine peace.

"No believer is immune from the trials and afflictions of life. In difficult times it is critical that we call upon God. Only He can deliver us out of our troubles. But too many Christians internalize their anxiety rather than rely upon God for relief and rescue. When deeply distressed, believers should pray to God, who is a very present help in time of trouble. When Christians call upon God from a pure heart, they may have confidence that He hears them and will answer according to His perfect will."

*from Holman Old Testament Commentary: Psalms 1-75, p. 34\*,35*

This promise of perfect peace in the midst of persecution belongs to God's redeemed saints who repent and confess their sin and accept the gift of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. There is only one way to become a child of God; there are no back-alley or hidden doors to enter God's family. Scripture declares, *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as LORD, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."* Romans 10:9,10, 13.

**Resources:**

Precept Upon Precept: 1 Samuel-God's Search for a Man After His Own Heart, 2013

*Preaching The Psalms: Unlocking the Unsearchable Riches of David's Treasury* by Steven J. Lawson, 2014

*Holman Old Testament Commentary: Psalms 1-75*, General Editor Max Anders, author Steven J. Lawson, 2003

## Homework

“Each genre of psalm has its own distinctive pattern and personality. Each classification progresses from one level of thought to the next in predictable fashion. As one becomes acquainted with the basic arrangements of each class of Psalms, he is better able to interact with the unique features of each type” (*Preaching The Psalms*, p. 101). “

1. Read Psalm 64. It is a lament.

• From which Book is this and to which Pentateuch book does it correlate? (Gen., Ex., Lev., No., Deut)? Record details from the title.

• 64: 1,2: Request

• 64:3-6: Reproach

• 64:7-9: Retribution

• 64:10: Rejoicing

2. What is Central Idea of Psalm 64 and how can it become YOUR Psalm?

3. Read Psalm 90, a community (rather than individual) lament written by Moses during the wilderness wanderings and, therefore, the oldest Psalm. It opens Book 4 - relates to book of Numbers and compiled after Israel's exile in Babylon during Ezra and Nehemiah.

A. Problem Stated

B. Perplexity Expressed

C. God Petitioned

D. Praise Vowed

What is the Central Idea of this Psalm?

4. To prepare for next meeting (you have 2 weeks), read 1 Samuel 19, 20, and 21. Record the events and any observations.

5. Continue to read the Psalms, five a day will finish them in one month.