

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

1 Samuel 18:6-9, 29

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### INTRODUCTION

- A. A famous conflict existed between Winston Churchill (Prime Minister of England) and Lady Astor (first woman to serve in the British House of Commons).  
It was well-known that they despised one another. There are numerous stories about how Mr. Churchill kept the battle going with his barbs and witticisms. On one occasion Lady Astor said to Churchill, "If I were your wife I would fill your cocktail glass with poison."  
Churchill replied, "Lady Astor, if you were my wife, I would drink it."  
On another occasion, Lady Astor made the public accusation: "Mr. Churchill, you are disgracefully drunk!"  
Churchill said, "Yes I am. And you, dear lady, are disgracefully ugly. What's more, tomorrow morning / will be sober."
- B. David was called, by God himself, a "man after my own heart" (1 Samuel 13 14 & Acts 13:22).
  - 1. Yet he did not live either a sinless life or a charmed life. For instance...
    - a. One infant son died at birth.
    - b. One daughter was raped by one of his own sons.
    - c. Another son lead a rebellion against him to take his thrown away.
  - 2. Perhaps the best example of his less than charmed life, though, was his years long conflict with his predecessor, King Saul.
- C. Do you have a difficult person in your life like Winston Churchill or King David had? What can you do? Let's see what we can learn about dealing with difficult people from the story of David and Saul.

### I. FIRST, WE LEARN THAT GOD ALLOWS DIFFICULT PEOPLE INTO OUR LIVES.

- A. God allowed Saul into David's life.
  - 1. Their conflict started when David killed Goliath-18:6-9, 29.
  - 2. Things got progressively worse between them.
    - a. In this chapter we later learn that Saul tried to kill David with a spear-18:10-11.
    - b. This struggle went on for 15 years until Saul died.
- B. Some of us have a Saul in our lives.
  - 1. Perhaps at the office, at home, at church, in-law, neighbor, etc.
  - 2. Our Saul might not be a person but a situation---financial, health, stress, etc.
- C. Why didn't David do something about Saul?
  - 1. In 1 Samuel 24, David could have killed Saul when he was alone with him in a cave.
  - 2. Why didn't he?
    - a. Seven times David mentioned that God had anointed Saul as the King of Israel (1 Samuel 24:6, 24:10, 26:9, 11, 23; 2 Samuel 1:14).
    - b. What was David saying by this? He was acknowledging that God brought Saul into his life and he would not take matters into his own hands to do something about it.
  - 3. The lesson here for us is that for some strange reason God has brought our Saul into our lives and it is up to him, not us, to take him out of our lives.

### II. SECOND, WE LEARN THAT GOD USES DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES.

- A. God must have used Saul in David's life, but how?
  - 1. Not to torment him or punish him.
  - 2. Rather to force David to again and again fall on his face before God and confess his absolute inability to deal with Saul himself. In other words, Saul helped David remember how much he needed God.
  - 3. Why did David need to remember his need for God? Because David's success could have easily gone to his head. After all....

- a. As a boy David killed lions and bears with a sling.
  - b. As probably a teenager he killed the giant Goliath in the same way.
  - c. As a young man the prophet Samuel told him he would be the next King of Israel.
  - d. David needed a Saul to keep his feet on the ground and his heart in need of God.
- B. God may be using a Saul in our lives too.
1. Isn't this the truth of Romans 8:28?
  2. You may not be able to see what to learn from your "Saul", but this doesn't mean God made a mistake in using him.
  3. We have a choice to make.
    - a. Not whether we have a "Saul" or not, because you probably have one.
    - b. But a choice of how to respond to our "Saul".
      - i. We can try and take things into our own hands.
      - ii. We can get angry at God for allowing our "Saul".
      - iii. Or, like David, we can trust God to do what's best.

## **CONCLUSION**

- A. Do you have a Saul?
- B. Remember....
  1. God put him or her there.
  2. God is using your "Saul" for his purpose.
  3. Trust him to do what's best.