David’s Fame: Rooted in

Favour with God **(1 Sam 18-19)**

*Notes: Week Ten*

**1 Samuel 18-19 (HCSB)**

**David’s Success**

**18**When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan committed himself to David, and loved him as much as he loved himself. **2**Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him return to his father’s house.

**3**Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much as himself. **4**Then Jonathan removed the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his military tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

**5**David marched out with the army and was successful in everything Saul sent him to do. Saul put him in command of the soldiers, which pleased all the people and Saul’s servants as well.

**6**As the troops were coming back, when David was returning from killing the Philistine, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, singing and dancing with tambourines, with shouts of joy, and with three-stringed instruments. **7**As they celebrated, the women sang:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands.

**8**Saul was furious and resented this song.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB" \l "fen-HCSB-7685a" \o "See footnote a)] “They credited tens of thousands to David,” he complained, “but they only credited me with thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom?” **9**So Saul watched David jealously from that day forward.

**Saul Attempts to Kill David**

**10**The next day an evil spirit sent from God took control of Saul, and he began to rave[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-7687b)] inside the palace. David was playing the lyre as usual, but Saul was holding a spear, **11**and he threw it, thinking, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” But David got away from him twice.

**12**Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had left Saul.**13**Therefore, Saul reassigned David and made him commander over 1,000 men. David led the troops **14**and continued to be successful in all his activities because the Lord was with him. **15**When Saul observed that David was very successful, he dreaded him. **16**But all Israel and Judah loved David because he was leading their troops. **17**Saul told David, “Here is my oldest daughter Merab. I’ll give her to you as a wife, if you will be a warrior for me and fight the Lord’s battles.” But Saul was thinking, “My hand doesn’t need to be against him; let the hand of the Philistines be against him.”

**18**Then David responded, “Who am I, and what is my family or my father’s clan in Israel that I should become the king’s son-in-law?” **19**When it was time to give Saul’s daughter Merab to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

**David’s Marriage to Michal**

**20**Now Saul’s daughter Michal loved David, and when it was reported to Saul, it pleased him.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB" \l "fen-HCSB-7697c" \o "See footnote c)] **21**“I’ll give her to him,” Saul thought. “She’ll be a trap for him, and the hand of the Philistines will be against him.” So Saul said to David a second time, “You can now be my son-in-law.”

**22**Saul then ordered his servants, “Speak to David in private and tell him, ‘Look, the king is pleased with you, and all his servants love you. Therefore, you should become the king’s son-in-law.’”

**23**Saul’s servants reported these words directly to David,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB" \l "fen-HCSB-7700d" \o "See footnote d)] but he replied, “Is it trivial in your sight to become the king’s son-in-law? I am a poor man who is common.”

**24**The servants reported back to Saul, “These are the words David spoke.”

**25**Then Saul replied, “Say this to David: ‘The king desires no other bride-price except 100 Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.’” Actually, Saul intended to cause David’s death at the hands of the Philistines.

**26**When the servants reported these terms to David, he was pleased[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-7703e)] to become the king’s son-in-law. Before the wedding day arrived,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB" \l "fen-HCSB-7703f" \o "See footnote f)] **27**David and his men went out and killed 200[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-7704g)] Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented them as full payment to the king to become his son-in-law. Then Saul gave his daughter Michal to David as his wife. **28**Saul realized that the Lord was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him, **29**and he became even more afraid of David. As a result, Saul was David’s enemy from then on.

**30**Every time the Philistine commanders came out to fight, David was more successful than all of Saul’s officers. So his name became well known.

**David Delivered from Saul**

**19**Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. But Saul’s son Jonathan liked David very much, **2**so he told him: “My father Saul intends to kill you. Be on your guard in the morning and hide in a secret place and stay there. **3**I’ll go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are and talk to him about you. When I see what he says, I’ll tell you.”

**4**Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul. He said to him: “The king should not sin against his servant David. He hasn’t sinned against you; in fact, his actions have been a great advantage to you. **5**He took his life in his hands when he struck down the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced, so why would you sin against innocent blood by killing David for no reason?”

**6**Saul listened to Jonathan’s advice and swore an oath: “As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be killed.” **7**So Jonathan summoned David and told him all these words. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he served him as he did before.

**8**When war broke out again, David went out and fought against the Philistines. He defeated them with such a great force that they fled from him.

**9**Now an evil spirit sent from the Lord came on Saul as he was sitting in his palace holding a spear. David was playing the lyre, **10**and Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear. As the spear struck the wall, David eluded Saul, ran away, and escaped that night. **11**Saul sent agents to David’s house to watch for him and kill him in the morning. But his wife Michal warned David, “If you don’t escape tonight, you will be dead tomorrow!” **12**So she lowered David from the window, and he fled and escaped. **13**Then Michal took the household idol and put it on the bed, placed some goat hair on its head, and covered it with a garment. **14**When Saul sent agents to seize David, Michal said, “He’s sick.”

**15**Saul sent the agents back to see David and said, “Bring him on his bed so I can kill him.” **16**When the messengers arrived, to their surprise, the household idol was on the bed with some goat hair on its head.

**17**Saul asked Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this? You sent my enemy away, and he has escaped!”

She answered him, “He said to me, ‘Let me go! Why should I kill you?’”

**18**So David fled and escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah and told him everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel left and stayed at Naioth.

**19**When it was reported to Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah, **20**he sent agents to seize David. However, when they saw the group of prophets prophesying with Samuel leading them, the Spirit of God came on Saul’s agents, and they also started prophesying. **21**When they reported to Saul, he sent other agents, and they also began prophesying. So Saul tried again and sent a third group of agents, and even they began prophesying. **22**Then Saul himself went to Ramah. He came to the large cistern at Secu, looked around, and asked, “Where are Samuel and David?”

“At Naioth in Ramah,” someone said.

**23**So he went to Naioth in Ramah. The Spirit of God also came on him, and as he walked along, he prophesied until he entered Naioth in Ramah. **24**Saul then removed his clothes and also prophesied before Samuel; he collapsed and lay naked all that day and all that night. That is why they say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

**Footnotes:**

1. [1 Samuel 18:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7685) Lit *furious; this saying was evil in his eyes*
2. [1 Samuel 18:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7687) Or *prophesy*
3. [1 Samuel 18:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7697) Lit *Saul, the thing was right in his eyes*
4. [1 Samuel 18:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7700) Lit *words in David’s ears*
5. [1 Samuel 18:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7703) Lit *David, it was right in David’s eyes*
6. [1 Samuel 18:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7703) Lit *And the days were not full*
7. [1 Samuel 18:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+18-19&version=HCSB#en-HCSB-7704) LXX reads *100*

**Holman Christian Standard Bible *- Study Bible[[1]](#footnote-1)***

*1 Samuel 18-19*

[**18:1**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A1) Jonathan committed himself to David is literally "Jonathan's life was bound together with David's." The same expression occurs in [Gen 44:30](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+44%3A30) in reference to Jacob and his son, Benjamin. Both David and Jonathan were valiant warriors who had taken stands of faith against incredible opposition ([1Sam 14:6-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A6-14); [17:31-51](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+17%3A31-51)), so it is not surprising they would become close friends. As much as he loved himself could also be translated "as much as he loved his own life." The phrase is repeated in [verse 3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+44%3A3) and [20:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+20%3A17).

[**18:2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A2) Before the victory over the Philistines, David would sometimes return to his father's house in Bethlehem to look after family matters. Now, the king wanted David to remain constantly with him.

[**18:3**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A3) On he loved him as much as himself, see note at [verse 1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A1).

[**18:4**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A4) The covenant between Jonathan and David may have included the giving of special gifts to David, the new warrior hero. David thus secured not only Goliath's sword ([17:54](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+17%3A54)), but the robe... military tunic... sword... bow, and belt of Israel's prince, showing that God was preparing him for his royal role.

[**18:5**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A5) David enjoyed success with the army wherever Saul sent him, so the king made him head of the army. The expression Saul's servants probably designate either the king's military officers or his closest advisers.

[**18:6**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A6) The phrase David was returning from killing the Philistine probably refers to a later time of battle than David's original battle with Goliath because [verse 5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A5) mentions David's promotion, implying some passage of time. Earlier traditions of women... singing and dancing to celebrate military victories were well known ([Ex 15:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ex+15%3A21); [Jdg 5:1-31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+5%3A1-31)). The cities of Israel were safe from the Philistine threat, and that was reason to celebrate.

[**18:7**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A7) The words Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands are the only ones preserved from the women's singing. They were not necessarily contrasting Saul's conquests with David's and exalting David over Saul. The Hebrew word translated "but" also may mean "and," and the words "thousands" and "ten thousands" occur elsewhere as a word pair in poetry ([Dt 32:30](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Dt+32%3A30); [Ps 91:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ps+91%3A7); [Mic 6:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mic+6%3A7)). In fact, the women may have intended to praise Saul by what they affirmed about David—the king had made an excellent choice by naming David his commander.

[**18:8**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A8) Whatever the women intended by their song, Saul resented what he perceived as their lower assessment of his fighting ability. Perhaps Saul also remembered Samuel's words about God already having chosen his successor ([13:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+13%3A14); [15:28](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+15%3A28)). Saul's words, What more can he have but the kingdom? reveal the depth of his suspicion.

[**18:9**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A9) The Hebrew word for jealously is related to the word for "eye" and suggests that Saul kept a close eye on David from that day forward.

[**18:10**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A10) On evil spirit sent from God, see note at [16:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+16%3A14). The Hebrew term translated rave literally means "prophesy," but the word also is used of false prophets ([1Ki 18:29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ki+18%3A29); [22:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ki+22%3A10)). In this context it may refer more to Saul's excited, agitated state. [Jeremiah 29:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jer+29%3A26) may also denote this latter sense.

[**18:11**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A11) The evil spirit's influence, combined with Saul's jealousy, may have led him to hurl his spear. The allusion to David's twofold escape suggests he remained after Saul's first throw, perhaps to reason with the king and help him through his tormented state.

[**18:13**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A13) Saul reassigned David to military duty to get him out of his presence.

[**18:15**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A15) Saul's fear of David increased in proportion to David's successes.

[**18:16**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A16) The fact that all Israel and Judah (see note at [11:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+11%3A8)) loved David put Saul in a more difficult position, since the people would not understand why Saul removed someone as effective as David.

[**18:17**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A17) Saul tried a new strategy to rid himself of David. He proposed that David marry Saul's oldest daughter Merab in exchange for David's increased role as a warrior. Saul knew David's chances of death increased the more time he spent in war; perhaps the Philistines would kill him and end Saul's problem.

[**18:18**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A18) David's reluctance came from his recognition of his lower social standing in comparison to Saul's more influential background ([9:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+9%3A1)).

[**18:19**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A19) Merab eventually married and had five sons, all of whom the Gibeonites later put to death because of Saul's sin against them ([2Sam 21:8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+21%3A8-9)).

[**18:20**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A20) Michal, another daughter of Saul, loved David. The text may imply that Merab, by contrast, had no feelings for David.

[**18:21**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A21) Perhaps Saul thought Michal would be a trap because she might distract David's attention from his military duties, or that the bride price Saul intended to request ([v. 25](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A25)) would put David in a life-threatening situation. Yet another possibility is that Saul thought Michal would lead David away from the Lord. [First Samuel 19:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A13) has been cited to support this, but the context is uncertain.

[**18:23**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A23) David again protested becoming the king's son-in-law by pointing out his humble ancestry ([v. 18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A18)).

[**18:25**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A25) To pay the bride price David had to kill 100 Philistines.

[**18:26**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A26) David was pleased (lit "it was right in David's eyes") that Saul would put character and valor above ancestral bloodline. Before the wedding day arrived (lit "The days were not full") is perhaps a reference to the time Saul had given David to secure the bride price.

[**18:27**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A27) David and his men secured twice the payment required—further evidence of David's desire to please Saul regardless of the risk.

[**18:28**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A28) Saul realized (lit "Saul saw and knew") too late what perhaps he should have realized earlier ([vv. 13-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A13-14))—the Lord was with David. Further, perhaps Saul had anticipated Michal's loyalties would remain with him, her father, but now he saw that Michal loved David. Through David's friendship with Jonathan ([vv. 1-3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A1-3)) and now through his marriage to Michal, he was firmly established as part of the royal family.

[**18:29**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A29) Tragically, jealousy and Saul's tormented spirit nullified any family bond or loyalty his son-in-law David showed him.

[**18:30**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A30) Saul's officers certainly included some of Saul's relatives (7:55), thus heightening the tension between David and Saul. As David's name became well known, many people probably began to speculate that he would become Saul's successor.

[**19:2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A2) Jonathan made sure David knew about Saul's plan. Ironically, Jonathan, as King Saul's oldest son, had the most to gain by David's death.

[**19:3**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A3) If David did not overhear the conversation between Jonathan and Saul from his hiding place, Jonathan would inform him later.

[**19:4-5**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A4-5) Jonathan spoke well of David and suggested that his father Saul should spare him for three reasons. First, David was innocent of any sin against Saul. Second, the Lord had used David to bring a great victory for all Israel. Third, killing David for no reason would make Saul guilty of shedding innocent blood.

[**19:6**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A6) The phrase As surely as the Lord lives was a common way of introducing an oath ([1Ki 17:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ki+17%3A1)).

[**19:7**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A7) It is not clear whether the expression served him as he did before denotes David's lyre-playing or leading the military. Perhaps both are intended since both appear in the immediate context ([vv. 8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A8-9)).

[**19:9**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A9) Holding a spear while sitting in his palace may suggest Saul's extreme paranoia. David was playing the lyre to soothe Saul's tormented mind ([16:23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+16%3A23)).

[**19:10**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A10) David eluded Saul... and escaped, perhaps because he was more wary after the previous incident ([18:10-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A10-11)). He did not provide the king a second opportunity to strike him down, but fled to his home.

****[**19:11**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A11) Michal discovered her father's intentions to murder David and warned him that delay in fleeing would bring his death.

[**19:12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A12) Again, a member of Saul's family helped David escape Saul's death sentence.

[**19:13**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A13) The household idol (Hb *teraphim)* was apparently large enough that it would appear as though David's body lay on the bed under a garment. Such idols also could be smaller in size ([Gen 31:19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+31%3A19),[34](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+31%3A34)). No explanation is given for why such a thing was in David's house.

[**19:15**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A15) Saul's agents apparently did not want to challenge Michal's word about David's illness ([v. 14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A14)), so they returned to the king without him.

[**19:16**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A16) The messengers arrived at David's house a second time, only to discover what Michal had done. By then, David had escaped.

[**19:17**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A17) When Saul challenged his daughter Michal about her deception, she replied that David had threatened to kill her if she did not cooperate. Saul could not prove she was lying since no witnesses were present.

[**19:18**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A18) David fled three miles to Samuel at Ramah. The prophet also knew fear of Saul ([16:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+16%3A2)), and the two of them went to Naioth, perhaps a designation of dwellings for prophets in Ramah ([vv. 19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A19),[22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A22)).

[**19:20**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A20) As the king's agents encountered a group of prophets prophesying with Samuel, God's divine touch overrode their human intentions and they also started prophesying. This also happened with the next two groups that Saul sent ([v. 21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A21)).

[**19:22**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A22) The large cistern at Secu is mentioned only here, but it may be alluded to in [9:11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+9%3A11).

[**19:23**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A23) The Spirit of God overruled Saul's intentions just as He had done with the king's agents. The one who sought to kill God's servant now spoke God's praises.

[**19:24**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A24) The king laid aside his royal clothes, perhaps as a sign that he was soon to lay aside the kingship. He lay naked, an act of further humiliation for anyone, but especially for someone of such high rank. The proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? (see [10:11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+10%3A11)), once again pointed to actions that were out of character for Saul.

**English Standard Version *- Study Bible[[2]](#footnote-2)***

*1 Samuel 18-19*

**[18:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:2)** **Saul took him**—according to “the ways of the king” ([8:11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%208:11)). **His father’s house** refers to David’s extended family (see [17:25-26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2017:25-26)).

**[18:3-4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:3-4)** **he loved him as his own soul**. Jonathan would eventually give up any claim to the throne for David’s sake ([23:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2023:17)) and even risk his life ([20:30-33](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2020:30-33)) for David; see note on [2 Sam. 1:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=2830&sec=00007797#n10001026). **Jonathan... gave it to David**. Primogeniture, whereby the firstborn son received the primary leadership role and a double portion of the family inheritance, was a tradition but not an absolute rule. Nevertheless, as the popular eldest son, Jonathan would have been accepted as Saul’s heir ([1 Sam. 20:31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+20%3A31); [23:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+23%3A17); [2 Sam. 1:4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2%20Samuel%201:4)). Since to all appearances the dynasty had just begun, however, David was considered even more of a threat to Jonathan than to Saul. No one seems to have viewed Jonathan’s gifts to David as a sign of abdication, but Jonathan’s actions (perhaps unwittingly) foreshadowed the transfer of the kingship to David. It is not recorded at what point Jonathan realized that David was God’s chosen.

***[18:6-30](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:6-30) Saul Becomes David’s Enemy.*** As David’s success increases, Saul’s jealousy also increases.

**[18:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:6)** Women in Israel celebrated a victory with **singing and dancing** and instruments, especially with **tambourines** ([Ex. 15:20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Exodus%2015:20); [Judg. 11:34](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Judges%2011:34); see note on [1 Sam. 10:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=2830&sec=00007168#n09010005)). Many clay figurines or plaques depicting women playing tambourines have been discovered in Israel, Phoenicia, and Transjordan. They may have had a connection with prayers or praises for victory.

**[18:7-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:7-9)** **sang to one another**. I.e., antiphonally or responsively. Because **thousands**/**ten thousands** is a common parallelism, the general meaning of the song is, “Saul and David have killed many thousands.” Yet naming two distinct people in a number parallelism is unusual, and Saul interpreted it in the worst possible light. Hearing David even mentioned together with him in the same song, Saul begins to grow suspicious of David. The rest of the book is a description of Saul’s attempts, more and more openly, to get rid of David.

**[18:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:12)** **Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him**. Cf. [v. 14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A14) and [16:18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+16%3A18). Saul’s primary concern was not the Lord’s honor or the people’s welfare but himself.

**[18:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:17)** **fight the Lord’s battles**. See [17:47](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2017:47). Saul tried to make ill use of David’s zeal for God, hoping that very zeal would lead to his death by the hand of the Philistines. Saul’s plotting shows little faith in the Lord, for he thought the Philistines could defeat David even though “the Lord was with him” ([18:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:12)).

**[18:18-19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:18-19)** **Who am I**? Saul used David’s humble reply as an excuse to give Merab to another man. For Merab’s children, see [2 Sam. 21:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2%20Samuel%2021:8).

**[18:20-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:20-21)** **that she may be a snare for him**. Saul again tries to make ill use of someone’s love (cf. [v. 17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:17))—this time, his daughter’s—to destroy David.

**[18:25](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:25)** The **bride-price** was normally money, but since David could not afford what was due a king’s daughter, the king graciously let him display his valor instead. The Philistines had **foreskins** because they were “uncircumcised” (see [14:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2014:6) and [note](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=2830&sec=00007279#n09014006)).

***1 Samuel 19***

***[19:1-20:42](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:1-20:42) Saul’s Attempts to Kill David.*** Saul moves from trying to use the Philistines to kill David to actually ordering him killed. Jonathan brings about one reconciliation (and there may have been another one after [ch. 19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:1-24)), but David finally flees the court permanently.

**David Flees from Saul**

David’s growing reputation among the people as a warrior and leader incited Saul’s jealousy, and Saul began trying to kill David. David fled from Saul in Gibeah (1) and went to Samuel at Naioth in Ramah (2), but soon Saul sought him there, and David fled back to Jonathan in Gibeah (3). After Jonathan warned David of Saul’s determination to kill him, David fled to Ahimelech the priest at Nob (4), where he collected food and Goliath’s sword. David briefly sought refuge in the Philistine city of Gath (5) and then set up his headquarters at the cave of Adullam (6), where the ranks of his army swelled to 400 men. In order to protect his parents from harm, David left them in the care of the king of Moab at Mizpeh (7) and went to live in “the stronghold” (8). After some time, David went to the forest of Hereth (9) and then left to rescue nearby Keilah (10) from some Philistine raiding parties. When David heard that Saul was coming to Keilah, he and his growing army of 600 men relocated to the wilderness of Ziph (11). After the men of Ziph betrayed David to Saul, David and his men went to live in the wilderness of Maon (12) and narrowly escaped capture there by Saul. Fleeing the strongholds of Engedi (13), David again evaded capture by Saul and refused an opportunity to take Saul’s life. David returned to “the stronghold” (14) and then to the wilderness of Paran (15). While he was there, David was again betrayed to Saul by the men of Ziph and refused another opportunity to take Saul’s life. Finally, David and his men sought refuge with Achish, the king of Gath (16).



[**19:4**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:4) Jonathan appeals to Saul the **king** on the basis of a king’s obligation to do justice (see [25:31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2025:31)).

**[19:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:5)** **took his life in his hand**. I.e., risked his life (see also [28:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2028:21); [Judg. 12:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Judges%2012:3)).

**[19:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:9)** **harmful spirit from the Lord**. See note on [16:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=2830&sec=00007386#n09016014).

**[19:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:10)** **he struck the spear into the wall**. David came close to losing his life, but “the Lord was with him” (see [18:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2018:12)). **David fled and escaped** also in [19:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A12), [18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A18). See note on [Acts 9:25](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=2830&sec=00031711#n44009025).

**[19:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:13)** The **image** (Hb. *terapim*) here was of human size and shape; contrast Laban’s household gods in [Gen. 31:19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+31%3A19), [34-35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ge+31%3A34-35).

**[19:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:14)** **He is sick** was apparently a lie, since David had fled. The biblical historians often record such actions without any explicit moral evaluation.

**[19:18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:18)** **Naioth** may refer to a shepherds’ camp. The prophetic fraternities of Israel lived in such settlements.

**[19:20-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:20-21)** **They also prophesied** (twice in these verses) probably implies that Saul’s messengers uttered words of prayer and praise to God as well as admonition and rebuke to each other, under the influence of the **Spirit of God**. Their aggressive intent was humbled before the Lord’s anointed king. See also [2 Kings 1:9-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2%20Kings%201:9-15), where another king sends messengers three times in vain. Some interpreters also see parallels in [1 Kings 8:10-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Kings%208:10-11) and [2 Chron. 5:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2%20Chronicles%205:14).

**[19:23-24](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:23-24)** **he too prophesied before Samuel**. The earlier question of [10:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2010:12), “Who is their father?” is answered by Samuel’s presence as “head” over the prophets (cf. [19:20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:20)). As three groups of messengers sent by Saul to take David succumb to prophesying ([vv. 20-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:20-21)), the **Spirit of God** came on Saul to take away his self-control and turn his hostility to prophetic praise. Even the will of the king is subject to the Lord’s will. **And he too stripped off his clothes**. The aggressive, angry king is humbled, even comically humiliated, before the power of the Lord, against whom he vainly strives. For the second time, background is provided for the old proverb (see note on [10:11-12](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=2830&sec=00007176#n09010011-09010012)), **“Is Saul also among the prophets?”** In the earlier context ([10:11-12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2010:11-12)) Saul was being established as king. In [ch. 19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:1-24), he openly seeks to kill the Lord’s anointed ([v. 1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1%20Samuel%2019:1)), and the throne, like his clothes, is beginning to be stripped from him.

**NLT Life Application Study Bible[[3]](#footnote-3)**

*1 Samuel 18-19*

[**18:1-4**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A1-4) When David and Jonathan met, they became close friends at once. Their friendship is one of the deepest and closest recorded in the Bible: (1) They based their friendship on commitment to God, not just each other; (2) they let nothing come between them, not even career or family problems; (3) they drew closer together when their friendship was tested; (4) they remained friends to the end.

Jonathan, the prince of Israel, later realized that David, and not he, would be the next king ([23:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+23%3A17)). But that did not weaken his love for David. Jonathan would much rather lose the throne of Israel than lose his closest friend.

|  |
| --- |
| **God Uses Simple Objects** |
| God often uses simple, ordinary objects to accomplish his tasks in the world. It is important only that they be dedicated to him for his use. What do you have that God can use? Anything and everything is a possible "instrument" for him. |
| *Object* | *Reference* | *Who Used It?* | *How Was It Used?* |
| A staff | [Exodus 4:2-4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ex+4%3A2-4) | Moses | To work miracles before Pharaoh |
| Horns | [Joshua 6:3-5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jos+6%3A3-5) | Joshua | To flatten the walls of Jericho |
| A fleece | [Judges 6:36-40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+6%3A36-40) | Gideon | To confirm God's will |
| Horns, jars, and torches | [Judges 7:19-22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+7%3A19-22) | Gideon | To defeat the Midianites |
| Jawbone | [Judges 15:15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+15%3A15) | Samson | To kill 1,000 Philistines |
| Smooth stone | [1 Samuel 17:40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+17%3A40) | David | To kill Goliath |
| Olive oil | [2 Kings 4:1-7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Ki+4%3A1-7) | Elisha | To demonstrate God's power to provide |
| A river | [2 Kings 5:9-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Ki+5%3A9-14) | Elisha | To heal a man of leprosy |
| Linen loincloth | [Jeremiah 13:1-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jer+13%3A1-11) | Jeremiah | As an object lesson of God's wrath |
| Clay jar | [Jeremiah 19:1-13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jer+19%3A1-13) | Jeremiah | As an object lesson of God's wrath |
| Iron griddle, water, and food | [Ezekiel 4:1-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eze+4%3A1-17) | Ezekiel | As an object lesson of judgment |
| Five loaves and two fish | [Mark 6:30-44](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mk+6%3A30-44) | Jesus | To feed a crowd of over 5,000 people |

[**18:8**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A8) Saul's appreciation for David turned to jealousy as people began to applaud David's exploits. In a jealous rage, Saul attempted to murder David by hurling his spear at him ([18:11,12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A11-12)).

Jealousy may not seem to be a major sin, but in reality, it is one step short of murder. Jealousy starts as you resent a rival; it leads to your wishing he or she were removed; then it manifests itself in your seeking ways to harm that person in word or action. Beware of letting jealousy get a foothold in your life.

[**18:10**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A10) The note on [16:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+16%3A14) explains what this tormenting spirit might have been.

[**18:11,12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A11-12) Saul tried to kill David because he was jealous of David's popularity, yet David continued to protect and comfort Saul. Perhaps people have been jealous of you and have even attacked you in some way. They may be intimidated by your strengths, which make them conscious of their own shortcomings. It would be natural to strike back or to avoid them. A better response is to befriend them ([Matthew 5:43, 44](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+5%3A43-44)) and to ask God for the strength to continue to love them, as David kept on loving Saul.

[**18:15-18**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A15-18) While Saul's popularity made him proud and arrogant, David remained humble ([18:23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A23)), even when the entire nation praised him. Although David succeeded in almost everything he tried and became famous throughout the land, he refused to use his popular support to his advantage against Saul. Don't allow popularity to twist your perception of your own importance. It's comparatively easy to be humble when you're not on center stage, but how will you react to praise and honor?

[**19:1, 2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A1-2) Is it ever right to disobey your father, as Jonathan did here? It is clearly a principle of Scripture that when a father instructs a son to break God's laws, the son should obey God rather than man. This principle assumes that the son is old enough to be accountable and to see through any deception. A son's role is to be respectful, helpful, and obedient to his father ([Ephesians 6:1-3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eph+6%3A1-3)), but not to follow commands or advice that violate God's laws.

[**19:20-24**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A20-24) This was the second time that Saul surprised everyone by joining a group of prophets and prophesying. This seems to be a group of people in Spirit-filled ecstasy. It was very powerful and contagious to anyone who found them. We do not now if they were speaking messages from God or merely joining in ecstatic expression. The first time this happened to Saul ([chapter 10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+10)) was right after he was anointed king and did not want to accept the responsibility. This time Saul was consumed with jealousy over David's growing popularity, but the Spirit of God immobilized him so he was unable to harm David. Although Saul was receptive to the Spirit of God and was caught up in prophesying, his heart and mind were far from loving God and thinking God's thoughts.

1. . Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORD*search* CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Samuel 18-19". [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORD*search* CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Samuel 18-19". [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . *Life Application Study Bible, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 440-443.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)