

BOOK OF 2 SAMUEL
DAVID DEALING WITH LOSS
2 SAMUEL 1:1-27

Introduction

(Summarize what has happened in 1 Samuel 29, 30, and 31)

We see here in 2 Samuel 1 that David is brought the news from the battlefield of the death of King Saul and Jonathan.

Read and comment on 2 Samuel 1:1-16

The young Amalekite took Saul's life thinking was doing Saul, David, and himself a favor.

1. He supposed that he was putting Saul out of his misery,
2. That he was getting Saul out of David's way, and
3. That he was in the process of gaining David's favor and gratitude, perhaps in the form of a reward of some kind.

Instead of being rewarded, he kindled David's wrath and was put to death!

Most folks tend to be more shocked that David had this young man killed than that the young man killed Saul. But David was right to put this Amalekite to death, on more than one count.

1. He could and should have killed him simply because he was an Amalekite (see 1 Samuel 15:1-3, 32-33).
2. He was obliged to execute him for having killed God's anointed. David was right to be angered by the Amalekite's treatment of Saul, and he was right to put him to death.

Now let's read 2 Samuel 1:17-27

In our text, we find David dealing with the loss of his best friend Jonathan and Israel's first King! **(Vs 17)**

Three times in *verse 19, 25, 27* we find the words, ***"How are the mighty fallen."***

David used this time to both to instruct the people and to write a memorial of his friend Jonathan.

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No doubt, the people of Israel were very grieved over the loss of Saul and Jonathan—the king and the crown prince having been slain.

David *"bade them teach the children of Judah the bow."* (Vs 18)

To take their minds off their sorrow, David issues this order to teach the children of Judah the use of the bow. What is going on with that? A couple of things I see.

1. Identification.

We've seen before in our study of 1 Samuel 20 how that Jonathan was proficient with the bow.

So teaching Judah the use of the bow would help them identify with their slain prince and remember him in a positive way that could help them! *"Be like Jonathan!"* It was a "living memorial" so to speak.

If you want to keep a memorial to someone, **exhibit in yourself the virtues that shined in them. Manifest in yourself the qualities that shined so brightly in them.**

No memorial is more fit than imitation of one's good qualities!

We too can determine to be a living monument by exhibiting within ourselves all that was good in those whom we've lost! **Imitation of a person's positive traits is one of the highest compliments that can be paid an individual!**

When David had these people taught to use the bow, every time they stringed an bow they would remember Jonathan! Every time they shot an arrow, they would remember Jonathan.

And whenever a regiment of archers went through the streets to the battle, they brought Jonathan before the public mind.

David instituted this form of royal artillery, on purpose, so that Jonathan might be kept in mind before the people.

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2. Preparation.

Saul and Jonathan had been shot by archers. (1 Samuel 31:3) The Philistines were evidently good in the use of the bow, but Saul's army (with the exception of Jonathan) was evidently weak in this area; as a result, they were not able to strike the Philistines at a distance.

Before Saul and the Israelites could get into hand to hand combat, where Israel might have been a match for the Philistines, the arrows of the Philistines had reached their king and his son.

His thoughts, no doubt, were that If Israel had known how better to use the bow, they might have been the conquerors rather than the conquered. So David hastens here to teach the men of Judah the use of the bow. This was a positive redirection of both anger and grief!

The children of Judah learning the use of the bow could possibly help them in their future battles with the Philistines and other enemies!

3. Activity.

Activity can be an effectual remedy in the time of sorrow. (Inactivity in such a time as grief tends towards depression and despair.) In any loss, positive activity can be invaluable as a comfort.

One should not just sit and brood over their loss. Little good can come from shutting oneself up to meditate upon the great loss that has befallen them!

Inactivity can inevitably lead to despair, while work or other activity can distract the mind from the sad loss that has taken place.

Little is more healthy than to have something to do and just do it! Activity can help to withdraw the mind from the sorrow which tries to overwhelm the soul.

If and when you experience a loss, and Satan tempts you to get alone and to cease from activity, resist the urge to do so!

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David was absolutely correct. The way to raise the people out of their despondency was to teach them the use of the bow — their own arrows would slay their grief!

Cf. Joshua 1:1,2.

David helped the people deal with their grief by writing this song which the daughters of Israel could sing. (Vs 19-23)

This too can help when dealing with grief!

How did David manage to speak so well of Saul, after all the suffering he caused David to endure?"

1. David trusted in the God whom he served.

David knew that his God is a mighty God. He saw God as being in control of all things. Therefore, it was God who allowed Saul to pursue and persecute him. And God had His own purposes in that!

Saul was used of God to help prepare David for the leadership role of Israel that he ultimately assumed.

His suffering was not in vain, and so he didn't need to feel badly toward Saul.

Just as Joseph was able to be grateful for the hand of God in his life through his suffering (see Genesis 50:20), so also is David is able to do the same.

2. David seems to have already dealt with Saul's sins against him by forgiving him.

It appears that David had truly forgiven Saul, and had no bitterness to suppress or even to vent in his eulogy of Saul. It is a sad thing to harbor bitterness, because once a person is dead, it is a little bit late to forgive them.

David didn't have to dredge up the past because he kept short accounts.

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3. David probably thought more highly of Saul than we do.

Most folks, including myself, have a tendency to not like Saul very much. In fact, most of us tend to focus on the worst of folks rather than the best.

1 Samuel 14:47-48

These verses seem almost out of place. They are a kind of eulogy or benediction, placed before Saul's downfall in chapter 15, and also before the account of his death in chapter 31.

In spite of his ultimate failures, Saul did many good things. In his eulogy, David chooses to dwell on the good things.

4. David thinks of Saul in terms of his office and honors him in this light. David provides us with an excellent example of how we are to honor others.

The king was "*God's anointed.*" This expression is first employed in 1 Samuel and is used in reference to Saul and then David. It also refers to future kings, especially the Messiah.

The Hebrew word rendered "anointed" is the term transliterated "Messiah" in the English language. David honors Saul as "*God's anointed,*" and in so doing, honors the "*Anointed One*" who was to come. As the Old Testament revelation progresses, this becomes more and more clear.