

Thus far in our consideration of David's life we have seen his anointing, his service in Saul's court, and his confrontation with Goliath, which brings us to chapter 18, and his relationship with Jonathan and Saul. Simply put, Jonathan loved David and Saul feared David.

Thus, chapter 18 is a chapter of contrasts—there's the love of Jonathan and the hatred of Saul—both of these are grooming or preparing David to serve as king. In other words, we must remember, everything that happens to David from this point onward, is intended to prepare David to serve a king.

I. Jonathan Loved David (vv1-4)

II. Saul Feared David (vv5-30)

III. Practical Lessons

I. Jonathan Loved David (vv1-4)

1. These first four verses of chapter 18, form one of the most beautiful passages of Christian (brotherly) love in Scripture.
2. David has defeated Goliath, and in light of that, the Israelite army has pursued and defeated the Philistine army.
3. We learn from 17:57, that David returned to Saul after the battle, with the head of Goliath, v58—"And Saul said to him, 'Whose son are you, young man?' So David answered, 'I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.'"
4. Now, before we come to consider Jonathan's love for David, let me say a few words about Saul's question to David.
5. There has been some confusion about the last few verses of chapter 17—in essence the question becomes, "Why didn't Saul recognize David?"
6. Well, let me briefly suggest two possibilities—(a) Saul knew who David was but not his father (v56 – so the king said, 'Inquire whose son this young man is').
7. Thus, it's possible Saul knew who David was, but was curious who his father was—he wanted to know where and who he was from.
8. (b) Enough time had elapsed from when David served in Saul court to the battle with Goliath, that Saul forgot who David was.
9. Thus, it's possible Saul, because of time, the pressures of being king, and the troubling spirit, did not recognize David.
10. But either way, we read in 18:1—"Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."
11. But, before we examine Jonathan's love, let me say a few words about Jonathan the man—he was Saul's first born.
12. This means he may have been in line to replace Saul as king—we know from earlier chapters he was a brave leader.
13. Thus, Jonathan was a prince and decorated war hero, who no doubt had the respect of Saul's military and court.
14. Furthermore, because Jonathan was royalty, he no doubt lived a life of luxury, whereas David was from a modest family.
15. And so, there's a sense in which Jonathan and David were opposites—Jonathan was very likely older than David.
16. And yet, how does Jonathan treat David? Does he hate David? Does he despise David? Is he jealous of David?
17. No! Far from it! In fact, we learn that Jonathan loved David—and thus, let us consider three things about his love.
18. (1) The nature of his love, v—"the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."
19. Notice, there are two closely related ideas in this statement—he was knit to the soul of David, and loved him as his own soul.

20. (a) Jonathan was knit to the soul of David—the Hebrew word "was knit" literally means "to bind or tie together."
21. This underscores closeness and commitment—Jonathan committed himself to David as a close and faithful friend.
22. (b) Jonathan loved David as his own soul—this means he loved David as he loved himself, as he loved his own life.
23. Now, as most of you know by "love " generally refers to tender care or concern—Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.
24. (2) The reason for his love—believe it or not, this is actually the most difficult point to answer—why did Jonathan love David so much?
25. Well, there's a few answers that are somewhat obvious—(a) both Jonathan and David were God fearing men.
26. This means, they both had hearts after God's own heart—they were both indwelt by the same Spirit and had the same hope of eternal life.
27. In other words, they were knit together in Christian bonds and unity—they had true Christian brotherly fellowship.
28. (b) Both Jonathan and David were soldiers who fought for the good of Israel and the honor of Israel's covenant God.
29. And thus, it was only natural for Jonathan to love David, having just witnessed him defend the honor of God's name.
30. CHS—"Jonathan loved David out of great admiration of him. When he saw him come back with the head of Goliath in his hand, he loved him as a soldier loves a soldier, as a brave man loves another brave man."
31. (c) Jonathan saw in David his future king—it's very likely Jonathan recognized in David, qualities fit for a king.
32. In fact, when we come to the covenant between Jonathan and David, it becomes apparent, Jonathan viewed David as the king-apparent.
33. (3) The expression of his love, v3—"Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul."
34. Now, fundamentally, a covenant is a relationship that is built upon an oathbound promise—both parties promise certain things.
35. In this case, it's likely, both Jonathan and David promised to love and care for each other, and remain close friends.
36. V4—"And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt."
37. It seems likely this was an outward token of his covenant commitment to David—it was symbolic of his pledge.
38. It's as if Jonathan was saying—"All that I have I now pledge to your allegiance"—"I am loving you as myself."
39. Remember, Jonathan's robe was no mere robe, it was the royal robe of a prince—this was Jonathan recognizing his future king.
40. Thus, he gives him his armor, sword, bow, and belt—that is, he pledges to David his service as his loyal subject.
41. Dale Ralph Davis—"All this was both significant and surprising; significant because the clothes signify the person and his position—hence Jonathan renounces his position as crown prince and transfers, so far as his own will goes, the right of succession to David."
42. Oh friends, what a wonderful picture of self-denial—of humility—of willingness to promote others before ourselves.

II. Saul Feared David (vv5-30)

1. Chapter 18 is not merely about Jonathan's love for David, but it also describes Saul's fear and hatred for David.
2. In fact, while Jonathan's love for David is described in verses 1-4, Saul's hatred for David is described in verses 5-30.

3. In other words, while Jonathan's love for David was intense, Saul's fear and hatred for David was just as great.
4. Three times within this chapter we are expressly told why Saul feared David, v12—"Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul."
5. V14—"And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him. Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him."
6. V28—"Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy continually."
7. Thus, the fundamental reason Saul feared David was because he knew the Lord had rejected him and accepted David.
8. In other words, he knew that eventually, the kingdom would be taken from him, and would be given to David.
9. Thus, I want to suggest three things about Saul's fear as found in this chapter—it was a jealous, satanic, and murderous fear,
10. (1) It was a jealous fear—by this I mean, Saul was jealous of the way in which the people loved and praised David.
11. We read in v5, that Saul set David over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.
12. This means, Saul promoted David to a high military position, that demanded the respect of the soldiers and servants.
13. V5 says that David "acted wisely"—that is, he was wise in the way he led—he was no doubt brave and honest.
14. V6—"Now it had happened as they were coming home (from battle), when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments."
15. V7—"So the women sang as they danced, and said: Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."
16. V8—"Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom? So Saul eyed David from that day forward."
17. That is, Saul kept an eye upon David out of fear and suspicion—Saul watched David to find a way to get him.
18. (2) It was a Satanic fear—by this I mean, the fear that Saul had for David was ultimately driven by the evil spirit.
19. V10—"And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand."
20. Before we go any further, the first thing we need to clarify is, how or why did Saul prophecy by an evil spirit?
21. Well, I suggest the simplest way to understand this is, the evil spirit that troubled Saul, enabled Saul to prophecy.
22. Now obviously, Saul did not prophecy the truth—evil and lying spirits, can enable false prophets to prophesy lies.
23. Thus, as Saul was influenced by the evil spirit, he loses control, and seeks to kill David by pinning him to the wall.
24. Let us not overlook this point—Saul's fear and hatred of David was fueled and influenced by an unclean spirit.
25. (3) It was a murderous fear—that is, having failed to kill David directly, he seeks to deceptively kill him indirectly.
26. V13—"Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people."
27. In other words, Saul removed David from his court, and sent him out into battle, as a military leader and commander.

28. The phrase "he went out and come in before the people" is a military phrase, referring to going out and coming in from battle.
29. David went out with the army and fought with them, and then he returned with the army, after they gained the victory.
30. Thus, it appears that Saul hoped David would go out with the army, but never return with the army, because he was dead.
31. But this never happened—time after time, David went out with the army, and he always came in with the army.
32. The reason why is found in v14—"And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him"—the LORD preserved and prospered him.
33. V15—"Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him"—in other words, he realized the LORD was with him.
34. Verses 16 is in contrast to v15 (and Saul's response)—"But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them."
35. In other words, the people saw in David a faithful and brave warrior—they saw in him kingly character traits.
36. Thus, far from accomplishing Saul's goal, his plan actually increasingly endeared David to the people of Israel.
37. As a result, Saul comes up with a deceitful plan—he would offer David a daughter, if he won so many battles for him (but it appears his oldest daughter loved another man and was given to him in marriage).
38. Vv20-21—"Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. So Saul said, I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him."
39. Thus, Saul offers Michal to David as his wife, but David is reluctant to marry her because of his humble lineage.
40. V25—"Then Saul said, Thus you shall say to David: The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines."
41. We find in v27, that David, and his men, went out and killed two hundred Philistines, and brought their foreskins to Saul.
42. V28—"Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy continually."
43. And then in v30, we find David going out against the Philistines—and David's name became highly esteemed.
44. Thus, the chapter describes Jonathan as loving David, Saul as fearing and hating David, and David as acting wisely.

III. Practical Lessons

1. Now, while there are many practical observations and lessons from this chapter, I want to limit our focus to five.
2. But before I come to these, let me remind you something I've said many times—we must view David from two perspectives.
3. On one hand, he is an example of Christian living in the midst of opposition—he is example for Christians to follow.
4. But, on the other hand, David is a type of Christ, and thus, we must also see in David the shadow of our Savior.
5. And thus, while most of these lessons focus upon David as an example, we mustn't lose sight David is more than this.
6. We also see a shadow of our Savior in wonderful ways throughout this chapter, and I want to point this out along the way.
7. (1) Every Christian must beware of envy—several years ago, some of us men read a book by Jerry Bridges entitled Respectable Sins.

8. And by Respectable Sins he meant, certain sins that society, and even many Christians, don't seem concerned about.
9. Drunkenness and sexual immorality, these are sins everybody condemns, but such sins as jealousy and envy, these are often tolerated.
10. And yet, what we learn in Saul is that the sin of jealousy (or envy), can intensify into murder, if not addressed.
11. In fact, we actually learn a broader lesson—all sin must be dealt with in the heart, before it breaks forth in life.
12. Thus, Saul's envy had its beginning in the heart, v9—"So Saul eyed David from that day forward (NIV – from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David)."
13. Jealously and envy was in Saul's heart, and yet, because he failed to deal with it, it showed itself in his actions.
14. And thus, Saul attempted to kill David with a spear, and then he schemed and plotted to kill David by deception, and then, as we will see in chapter 19, Saul openly vows to kill David.
15. Dear friends, if sin is not dealt with in the heart, it will show itself openly in the life, and, it will grow to its vilest form.
16. Impure thoughts will result in adultery, and jealousy and envy results in murder—sin must be dealt with in the heart.
17. But here I want to focus a few minutes on the sin of envy—envy can best be defined as a heightened version of jealousy.
18. Jealousy is when you want something another has, envy is when you despise the fact they have it, and you're willing to do anything to take it from them.
19. Saul wanted what David had—David had God's blessing and the people's allegiance, and this envy, consumed him.
20. In fact, it consumed him to the point that he wanted to kill David—he was overcome with the passion of envy.
21. Doesn't this sound familiar—about a thousand years after David and Saul envy would consume the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day.
22. Mk.15:9-10—"But Pilate answered them, saying, 'Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy."
23. Why did the Jewish leadership hand Jesus over to Pilate? Why did they want the Romans to put Him to death?
24. Well, the answer is rather simple—they were envious—they were jealous of Jesus and they wanted what He had!
25. And they were willing to do anything to get it—lie, deceive, and murder—this is where envy ends, if not mortified.
26. Prov.14:30—"A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones"—it destroys the soul and body.
27. But how does a person mortify jealousy and envy? Well, to be somewhat simplistic, let me briefly suggest three helps.
28. Help 1—Identify all forms and degrees of envy—this is where we must start—we must honestly examine our hearts.
29. In order to do this, we must ask ourselves these questions—Do we feel regret at the success of those around us?
30. Are we quicker to criticize than praise? A person who's always criticizing others but rarely praises them, is likely jealous.
31. Remember, envy, as with every other sin, has its beginnings in the heart—this is where we must locate it, and mortify it.
32. Help 2—Promote the opposite virtues of envy—what are the opposite virtues of envy but gratitude and contentment.
33. Learn to be grateful for others when they exceed you, and learn to be thankful for the ways the Lord has blessed you.

34. Help 3—Trust and rest in the sovereignty of God—who ultimately gives one person more success than another?
35. 1Sam.2:7—"The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up" Ps.75:7—"But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another."
36. (2) Every Christian faces Satanic opposition—we mustn't overlook the fact, that Saul's hatred of David was Satanic.
37. While Saul's hatred of David came from his own heart, it was stirred up and aggravated by the distressing spirit.
38. Because Satan knew God anointed David to be king, he knew God's redemption was closely tied to young David.
39. And so too, just as Saul, driven by Satan, hated David, so all Christians will face their share of Sauls in this world.
40. (3) Every Christian needs faithful friendships—I find it interesting, that a chapter filled with Satanic opposition to David, begins the way it does.
41. It's as if God says—Because you will face much opposition, I have given you loyal friend to help and encourage you.
42. Let me put it this way—every Christian will face their share of Sauls, but God will usually give us a Jonathan.
43. Now, this doesn't mean that every friend will be equally close, but it does mean friends are an important part of life in this world.
44. Let me illustrate—I was cleaning out papers in my study a few months ago, and came across an old letter written to me in 1996.
45. It was written pastor Richard Wyrick—he worked at the Mission I was converted at, and got fired just after I was converted.
46. He moved down to OH, and I wrote him a letter telling him I had become fully reformed and joined a RB church.
47. RW—"The road that you are on is most definitely a lonely one. It is a path of very little traffic. But believe me, those you will meet along the way will really be of great comfort to you!"
48. What makes for a good friend? Well, let me suggest we learn from Jonathan, two essential qualities of a friend.
49. (a) Loyalty—Jonathan committed himself to David—he gave him his weapons, because he promised him his loyalty.
50. (b) Love—Jonathan loved David as his own soul—he loved David as he loved himself—he put David before himself.
51. Thus, before we move on to our fourth lesson, let me briefly say a few words about being and desiring a friend.
52. (i) If you want friends prove yourself friendly—many people want a Jonathan, but few people are willing to be a Jonathan.
53. Prov18:24—"A man who has friends must himself be friendly. But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
54. (ii) If you want to be friendly view others as Jonathan viewed David—do you remember the reasons I suggested, as to why Jonathan loved David?
55. He loved him because they were both Christians—they were both the objects of God's electing and redeeming love.
56. He loved him because he saw in him a faithful and brave soldier—he knew they were fighting for the same cause.
57. This is how we must look at each other—in short, we must look upon each other as Jonathan looked upon David.
58. (4) Every Christian prospers while facing hostility—although Saul was against David, God was with David (vv12, 14, 28).
59. Now, when you are reading a narrative within Scripture, you have to keep in mind, repeated words or phrases.

60. And there is an important Hebrew word repeated four times in chapter 18, and usually translated "wisely) (vv5, 14, 15, 3).
61. V5—"So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely" v14—"And David behaved wisely in all his ways" v15—"Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him" v30—"Then the princes of the Philistines went out to war. And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed."
62. Now this Hebrew word means "to act wisely so as to prosper"—thus, some translations render this word "prospered" or "found success."
63. In other words, regardless of Saul's opposition, David acted in such a way to prosper or have success in all he did.
64. The reason is found in v14—"And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him"—here is the source of his success.
65. One interesting thing about reading a narrative like this is, we are able to see everything, unlike those in the narrative.
66. We are able to see David acting wisely and prospering, even in the midst of Saul's jealous, Satanic, and murderous fear.
67. And even more importantly, we are able to see why David acted wisely and prospered—because the LORD was with him.
68. (5) Every Christian loves and pledges service to Christ—we learn this from Jonathan and his loving commitment to David.
69. There is a sense in which, in Jonathan we find a picture of every Christian, with regards to their relationship with Christ
70. Perhaps I could even say, we find in Jonathan and Saul, two very opposite responds to David, that reflect the two ways people respond to Christ.
71. Some love Him and pledge allegiance to Him, others despise Him and want nothing to do with Him, but everybody does something with Him.
72. Christ is the great Divider—everything comes down to what you do with Christ—do you bow to Him or despise Him.