

## STUDY 7

### **1 Samuel 18 - 20**

### **Loyalty and disloyalty amongst the royalty**

*Just for starters*

What makes an opinion worth listening to?

### **The opinion poll**

Read 1 Samuel 18.1 - 20.1

#### **Investigate**

1. What is the difference between David and Saul's situation? (18.12, cf. 16.13-14)
2. Fill out the following table to determine the opinion that various figures have of David.

Passage	Who	Opinion of David (for / against)	Proof of their opinion
18.1-4  19.1-7	Jonathan		
18.6-7	The women of Israel		
18.14	The Lord		
18.16	All Israel and Judah		
18.20, 28-29  19.11-17	Michal		
19.18	Samuel		
18.7-9  18.10-15  18.17, 20-29  19.9-10  19.11, 14-15	Saul		

3. How does Saul follow through with his promises?

(a) 17.25 and 18.17-19

(b) 19.6 and 19.15

#### **Saul's frustration**

Despite numerous attempts on David's life, Saul fails to lay even a finger on David. Saul's situation is becoming increasingly desperate. Not only has David won the hearts of Israel and Judah, but those whom Saul should have been able to depend upon let him down and they constantly foil his own plans: the LORD, Jonathan, Michal and Samuel. Saul is becoming more and more isolated as the LORD continues to frustrate him.

#### **The Emperor's New Clothes**

We saw back in chapter 13 that garments are symbols of authority. Here at the beginning of chapter 18 we see the Crown Prince Jonathan remove his own robe and armour, and give them to David. This was more than just a token of their tight friendship; it was a significant act recognising David as the future king of Israel. Jonathan was effectively abdicating his future authority as king in favour of the Lord's anointed—his friend, David.

At the end of chapter 19, Saul also disrobes and lies naked before the Lord. We have effectively returned to the situation in 10.10-12, where Samuel had anointed Saul but Saul had not been publicly acclaimed as king. Thus, yet again, Saul is a king without authority. The people's king has lost his people and now lies purely at the mercy of God.

## **Family feud**

### **Read 1 Samuel 20.1-42**

#### *Investigate*

4. Is David a loyal citizen of the kingdom?

5. How does Jonathan realise his father's intentions? (20.30-33)

6. What is so amazing about Jonathan's speech in 20.12-17?

### Jonathan's slip up

David and Jonathan plan their alibi together. However, when it comes to telling the alibi to Saul, Jonathan makes a big slip up. Rather than saying that David had asked permission to hurry back to Bethlehem for the sacrifice, Jonathan says that David asked to 'get away'—that is, make his escape. It is at this point that Saul realises Jonathan is in league with David and explodes with anger, cursing his own son in no uncertain terms. Saul feels utterly betrayed. And yet, in the midst of his anger, his words make sense: as long as David is alive, Jonathan's inheritance of the throne is far from certain.

7. What is the outcome of David and Jonathan's plan? (20.41-42)

*Think it through*

8. Is Jonathan a loyal citizen of the kingdom?

9. What do Jonathan's actions in this chapter teach us about:

a) loyalty to friends

b) loyalty to family

c) loyalty to God

d) priorities in relationships

10. Jonathan's loyalty to the Lord's anointed comes at great personal cost. What has following Christ cost you? What does Jesus have to say about the cost in Mark 10.28-30?