**Week Twelve – November 8/9 – I Samuel 18-19**

**Introduction -** Single-mindedness - we have all seen it and experienced it one way or another. It could be in a smaller thing like finishing the final level of a video game, or a larger one like spending years preparing for a career. Single-mindedness can be expressed in healthy ways, like consistently acting with clarity and initiative about what the most important thing in your life is at the time. It can also be expressed in unhealthy ways, like preoccupation with a relationship that is/was bad for you, addiction, or jealousy. **It could be small or big, healthy or unhealthy, but what is an example of a time in your life when you were locked in with a sense of single-mindedness?** Tonight we’ll walk through the account of Saul’s pervasive and crippling single-mindedness - his jealousy toward David.

**Read I Samuel 18:1-4 -** We met Jonathan, mostly in the context of a warrior, in chapters 13 and 14. Now we begin to see the depth of his friendship with David. From here in 18:1 “*Jonathan became one in spirit with David*” all the way to their last encounter in 23:16-18 “*Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God*”, we see the richness of a friendship built on a mutual trust in God. **What do you think it means to be “one spirit” with someone in a friendship? Can you think of a time in a friendship in which someone helped you or you helped someone find strength in God?**

**Read I Samuel 18:5-16 -** Israel produces a number one hit song after David comes home from war and everyone is singing it. **As David and Saul are credited for a successful victory, who do the Israelites forget to mention?** *(There’s no mention of ascribing God the victory).* All the people love this song except for Saul. **How does Saul react to this song? What is revealed about Saul’s true concern? Contrast the response of Saul with the response of Jonathan.** Saul’s jealousy is clearly on display and is the catalyst for great conflict. **Read James 3:13-18. What are we told are the dangers and the outcomes of jealousy? What areas in your life does jealousy creep in and how can we resolve to fight against it? What does jealousy reveal about what we believe about God? On the positive end, in 17-18 what is the fruit of the wisdom that opposes envy/ambition?**

David did not allow this fame to go to his head. Day by day he faithfully played the lyre in service to Saul. Yet Saul’s jealousy convinced him that David would be gunning to take the kingdom and Saul wants David gone. **Here are the first of many repeated efforts to kill David - what are the first two that we see and what are their results?** *(Throws spear at him and makes him commander in hopes he will die.)***Despite Saul’s plans, what is the consistent experience of David as seen in verses 5,14, and 15? What do both v. 12 and 14 say is the reason for this success?****How does Saul respond to the LORD being with David?** *(His jealousy turns into fear.)* We’ll watch this fear deepen in the next section.

**Read I Samuel 18:17-30 -** Saul's jealous hatred for David was so great, that he was willing to go to great lengths to ensure his downfall, even at the possible harm of his daughters. Due to Saul's pride he was so focused on himself that he gave no thought to God and allowed himself to be consumed by anger. **Why is pride so dangerous when it is the condition of the heart?** David, in v. 18 and 23, provides a direct contrast. He gives no thought to himself, but is genuinely humble in the face of God and the appointed King. **Why is humility so important for us as believers? What can we do to have more of a heart posture of humility and reverence towards God?**

In this passage, we see the undeniable and repetitive pattern: First, Saul puts David in a tricky situation to kill him. Then David, under the Lord's protection, has success and comes out with even more popularity. The theme here is similar to Joseph's story with his jealous brothers, which can be summed up with Genesis 50:20, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good," **When you are in seemingly inescapable difficulties, what are your first reponses/thoughts? Do you immediately think of how hard it is and wish to be delivered, or do you run to God knowing he will work it out for good? How can we cultivate a deeper trust that God will use it for good?**

**Read I Samuel 19:1-7 -** Saul recruits reinforcements and orders his servants and Jonathan to kill David. **What are the layers of boldness and love Jonathan demonstrates in these verses?** Saul’s authority over Jonathan was especially prevalent being both king and his father. Yet Jonathan maintained the spirit of Acts 5:29, *“We must obey God rather than men”* and was willing to pay the price for it. **Have there been any times where you had to pay the consequences for obeying God rather than man? What are things we can learn from Jonathan’s plea against Saul’s plans to harm David as we read v. 4-5?** (*He is honest, bold/direct, and gives specific examples)*

**Read I Samuel 19:8-17 -** Once again we see that Saul should not be allowed to have his spear indoors, but more importantly we see God’s protection of David continues to come through surprising means. God has now used Saul’s son and his daughter to rescue David from Saul. **What have we learned along the way about Jonathan’s character and his regard for the Lord? In 19:11-17 what do we learn about Michal’s character and his regard for the Lord?** (*Deception, why does she possess an idol*)

**Read I Samuel 19:18-24 -** This passage gives us a bit of comedic relief from the hate-crazy Saul trying to get rid of David, but it still emphasizes the same themes seen throughout the book: God's sovereignty and God's steadfast love for his children. **What is revealed about the character of God by the way he uses a rejected vessel such as Saul to proclaim His truth?** (*He is a completely self-sufficient God who needs nothing from us. He delights in our faith, but without it he would "raise up stones'' to accomplish what he needs.*)

**Conclusion -** As we have considered single-mindedness tonight, perhaps it has been a time of conviction. Perhaps the Lord is leading you to make minor or major adjustments about where you are placing the focus of your mind and heart. It could be one or both of the following:

* **It may be an act of commission, and if so where have you dedicated a sense of single-mindedness to something trivial or sinful?**
* **It may be an act of omission, and if so where have you failed to dedicate a sense of single-mindedness to Jesus and His Kingdom?**

**Are you willing to share any of these calls from God to make adjustments tonight? Are there any ways your family group can pray for you as you seek to obey God in those adjustments?**

**Additional notes:**

Because we have covered these two chapters in smaller sections, we might miss how overwhelming Saul’s pre-occupied jealousy is, whether in subtle or obvious ways. With that in mind, here is a compilation of how consistent (and how unhealthy!) Saul’s aim has been:

* 18:9 - “from that time on, Saul kept a close eye on David”
* 18:11 - “he hurled it (the spear), saying to himself, ‘I’ll pin David to the wall”” (Twice!)
* 18:12 - “Saul was afraid of David”
* 18:13 - “sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men” (in hopes that David would be slain in battle)
* 18:15 - “he (Saul) was afraid of him (David)”
* 18:17 - “I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!”
* 18:21 - Saul gives his daughter to David in marriage “so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.”
* 18:25 - “Saul’s plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines”
* 19:1 - “Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David.” (Not very subtle)
* 19:5 - Jonathan to Saul - “Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”
* 19:10 - “Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear” (Again!)
* 19:11 - “Saul sent men to David’s house to watch it and to kill him in the morning.”
* 19:20 - “so he (Saul) sent men to capture him (David)” (first and second time)
* 19:21 - “Saul sent men a third time”
* 19:22 - “Finally, he (Saul) left for Ramah” to try to capture David himself

19:6 - **“As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death.”** We have no idea whether Saul said this with a desire to keep his word. Saul had a bad track record of being genuine and sincere when it comes to turning from sin. He may have used this oath as a disguise to gain proximity to David in order to carry out his desire of killing him, or there may have been true conviction, but it soon wore off and his corruption prevailed.