



[Title Slide] Let's talk about the dangers of toxic roots in our lives, roots like jealousy and bitterness. I want to take some time today to dive into the life of Saul and some of the mistakes he made as Israel's first king. In particular, I want to look at the aftermath of David's triumph over Goliath and the Philistines. Basically, Saul didn't take it well.

Saul's life challenges us to ask the question: what do my actions reveal about things hiding under the surface in my life?

Let's dive in. After his victory against Goliath, David immediately became popular. Scripture records that everything Saul asked him to do, David succeeded.

[Slide] *1 Samuel 18:6-11 (NLT) ⁶ When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. ⁷ This was their song: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!"*

Did David kill tens of thousands? Did Saul kill thousands? No. They are crediting the victory against the Philistines to the two of them; the thousands that were killed were killed because David defeated Goliath.

⁸ This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" ⁹ So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

Regardless of who killed however many, Saul's jealousy and paranoia left him feeling threatened.

[Slide] *¹⁰ The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his hand, ¹¹ and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice.*

This chapter doesn't tell us what David was thinking; it tells us what everyone else was thinking about David, but it lets us shape our opinions of him based on others. Man, if there was one place I would love to know

what David was thinking it's here; the poor guy was just playing the harp and suddenly a spear flew at him. Apparently twice. Like, if you don't like the song, just tell me to stop! Talk about a toxic workplace!

In all seriousness, though, we do need to look at something a little closer here, specifically, the "tormenting spirit from God" that overwhelmed Saul. Some Bible translations describe it as "an evil spirit from God." Which is alarming to me, and maybe to you as well. Does God send evil spirits, tormenting spirits, to plague people? Why would He do that?

The ancient Hebrew here is more complex than what our English translations have been able to convey. Dr. Tsumura rightly points out that this is a linguistic problem, not a theological problem.¹ When Saul was anointed king, Samuel described to him how the Spirit of God would come upon him:

[Slide] *1 Samuel 10:6 (NLT) At that time the Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.*

After the death and resurrection of Christ, God gave the Holy Spirit to all His followers. If you have placed your faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit is within you. This was not the case before Jesus' time on Earth. It was a rare gift in ancient times for someone to have the Spirit of the Lord, and it was reserved for only a handful of individuals. In 1 Samuel 16:14, we are told that the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and this movement coincided with the Spirit being given to David.

Here is where the linguistic problem comes into play; the idea being communicated is this, God withdrew His Spirit from Saul. That was God's action. This withdrawal created a vacuum that evilness, torment, jealousy, paranoia rushed in to fill.

In Matthew, Jesus described what happens when we fail to fill these spaces in our lives with good:

[Slide] *Matthew 12:43-45 (NLT) ⁴³ "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, 'I will*

¹ David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), Kindle location 9769.

return to the person I came from.’ So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order. ⁴⁵ Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before. That will be the experience of this evil generation.”

It's a terrifying warning; it's not enough to simply get rid of evil behaviors, we need to replace them with good or they will come back. We see some overlap between this and what was going on with Saul. When God's Spirit was taken from him, Saul still could have chosen good. He led a nation filled with individuals who were able to choose to follow God and honor Him without the aid of God's Spirit in their lives. David had incredible faith long before the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. But instead of filling that vacuum with a heart for following God, Saul allowed it to be filled with evil.

Which brings us back to the story. Saul twice threw a spear at David, and David escaped twice.

[Slide] 1 Samuel 18:12-30 (NLT) ¹² Saul was then afraid of David, for the Lord was with David and had turned away from Saul. ¹³ Finally, Saul sent him away and appointed him commander over 1,000 men, and David faithfully led his troops into battle.

Saul couldn't bear to be in David's presence so he sent him away, maybe even hoping he would die in battle, but his plan backfired.

¹⁴ David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the Lord was with him. ¹⁵ When Saul recognized this, he became even more afraid of him. ¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David because he was so successful at leading his troops into battle.

[Slide] ¹⁷ One day Saul said to David, “I am ready to give you my older daughter, Merab, as your wife. But first you must prove yourself to be a real warrior by fighting the Lord's battles.” For Saul thought, “I'll send him out against the Philistines and let them kill him rather than doing it myself.”

Technically, David had already earned the right to marry his daughter. Saul had promised that honor to whoever killed Goliath, but his fear of David's rising status had him concerned about the impact of David becoming son-in-law to the king. So, he changed the terms of the deal hoping again to see him die.

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com