



Study #7: Shattered Emotions

1 Samuel 16–19
Week of 11/1

Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands" (1 Samuel 18:8).

WHO ME?! JEALOUS?

*Have you ever noticed that there are certain sins people just don't like to admit are problems for them? Jealousy seems to me to be one of those sins. People will readily admit to having struggles with worry, lust, fear, unbelief, pride, or selfishness, but not with jealousy and envy. As one envious man defensively told me in a meeting one day, "Well, I **KNOW** that I am not jealous!" Oh, really? To quote William Shakespeare, "Me thinks thou dost protest too much."*

SAUL AND DAVID

Saul was green with envy over David. He hated the women's song, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Big question: Do you think Saul would have admitted he was jealous of David? NEVER! Why is that?

Admitting jealousy reveals a great insecurity and a very rotten heart. and no one really wants to admit to having that kind of heart. Our pride kicks in at the thought of being jealous and we say, "Who me?!! No way!" The truth is that many of us struggle with jealousy, and pastors can be the worst offenders.

THE JEALOUSY TEST

1. Is there someone in your life (a friend, a sibling, a co-worker, a classmate, a teammate, or a "competitor") whom you always seem to compare yourself to, resulting in pride (YES, I am doing better than you are) or depression (CRUD, you are doing better than I am)?
2. Is there someone in your life who always seems to get the breaks, and it just makes you sick because you never seem to get them?
3. Is there someone in your life whom you secretly desire to see fail and fall flat on his face?
4. Is there someone in your life whom you have anger towards because people are singing louder and longer for him than they are for you?
5. Is there someone you have great trouble rejoicing with when something good happens for him?

Could it be that you, like Saul, are (dare I say it?) jealous?

OVERCOMING THE GREEN MONSTER

By nature, I am a very competitive person. In everything I do, I want to win. If the women of Israel are going to sing a song about slaying the Philistines, I want to be the one slaying ten thousand, not one thousand. I want to be David, not Saul. How about you?

My competitiveness can easily lead to jealousy if I am not careful. When I catch myself failing the jealousy test, I must quickly do the following to rid my heart of that poison:

1. QUIT COMPARING! *I am not to be concerned with being THE BEST. I am to make sure I always do MY BEST. Do you see the difference between these two things?*

In Matthew 25, Jesus told a great parable of the talents. The King was going on a long journey and entrusted his talents (a large sum of money) to his three servants. One man got five, another got two, and another got one. Obviously, the guy who started with one could NEVER outdo the guy who started with five. He could not be the best and the biggest producer in that parable. But he was not in competition with the other two guys. The Lord was concerned about the one talent guy doing his best, not being the best.

At the end of life, the big questions from the Lord will be simply this: What did you do with what I gave you? Did you do your best and step out in faith? Did you use that one talent to the full, to the glory of your God, or did you bury it in the ground, grumbling the whole time that you never get a break, that others always get more than you do, and that God is just not fair?

My friend, quit comparing and start using what you have been given. Do your best and leave the results with God.

2. START REALIZING! *Your job on this earth is to please God, not to be the undisputed champion in every field of competition. When you focus on pleasing God, you keep your eyes where they should be: on God and off other people. And when you really focus on pleasing God, you do your best and forget about being the best.*

KING SAUL, KING BUST

Saul's life was a tragedy of epic proportions because jealousy consumed him. He could have had a great reign, utilizing a gifted champion like David to the full in his kingdom. Instead, he spent the vast majority of his 40-year reign as a jealous despot, living a life full of misery, anger, bitterness, paranoia, and distance from God. What a sad picture of the ravaging effects of jealousy.

Don't let jealousy eat your lunch as it ate Saul's. Quit comparing, start realizing, and enjoy a life lived for His glory and the fame of His name!¹

Open It

1. Describe a time when you, as a child, found yourself jealous of someone else.

Read It: 1 Samuel 16:14–23; 1 Samuel 18:6–16; 1 Samuel 19:1–23

Explore It

2. How do David and Saul first meet one another?

¹ <http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/from-his-heart/read/devotionals/encouragement-from-jeff-schreve/from-his-heart-week-of-april-24-11602713-11602713.html>

3. What incident causes Saul to become jealous of David?

4. What causes Saul to become undone, according to 1 Samuel 18:10?

5. What does Saul's jealousy lead him to do to David in Chapter 18?

6. What vow does Saul give regarding David in 1 Samuel 19:6?

7. How does Saul break this vow in 1 Samuel 19:11?

Get It

David Anointed King of Israel (16:1–23)

With the rejection of Saul on the part of God, the Spirit of Jehovah had departed from him, and an evil spirit from Jehovah had come upon him, who filled him with fear and anguish. The "evil spirit from Jehovah" which came into Saul in the place of the Spirit of Jehovah, was not merely an inward feeling of depression at the rejection announced to him, which grew into melancholy, and occasionally broke out in passing fits of insanity, but a higher evil power, which took possession of him, and not only deprived him of his peace of mind, but stirred up the feelings, ideas, imagination, and thoughts of his soul to such an extent that at times it drove him even into madness.²

8. In verses 13–23, David is filled with God's Spirit and stands before his brothers as the anointed successor to Saul. Notice that God leads David, not to the throne, but to the servant's quarters. Why do you think God takes David through this humble process?

9. Reflect on verses 14 and 15 in light of what you read in James 1:12–18. Based on what we have seen so far of Saul, how responsible was he for what occurred to him spiritually?

²<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/kdo/view.cgi?bk=8&ch=16>

10. What is it about music that can soothe shattered emotions? What songs or hymns have helped you through a time of personal struggle?

11. While music was of some help to Saul, how could drawing near to God have worked better? Why was he unwilling to turn to God in his time of inner turmoil?

Saul Becomes Jealous of David (18:1–30)

*Immediately after the battle with Goliath, David and Jonathan become best friends. Jonathan feels so much allegiance to David that he gives him his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt (v. 13). This reveals Jonathan's incredible respect and honor for David. In later chapters, we will see that this friendship becomes stalwart and unbreakable. As David fights more and more battles, the Israelites give him much praise. The women sing in the streets, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." **This is not pleasing to Saul. His ego swells and he begins to let jealousy seep into his heart.** Saul proclaims, "What more can he have but the kingdom" (v. 8). This simply means that David is practically the second most powerful man in the kingdom.*

*The very next day "a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul" (v. 10) that causes Saul to be angry with David. This word "harmful" is the same Hebrew word (ra') as in 16:14, which can mean evil. From that day on Saul continued to search out ways to kill David. Saul even tries to get his daughter to marry him "that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him" (v. 21). Saul is afraid of David because he has the Spirit of the LORD. **So, instead of turning to God, he willfully becomes David's enemy.** Nevertheless, David hopes in God and stays faithful to Saul during this grave adversity. This chapter shows the utter ugliness of Saul's heart and how far he has drifted from God.³*

12. What are some areas in your life where you compare yourself to other people?

13. Do you think measuring ourselves by others is generally productive? Why or why not?

14. Has something like what happened to Saul ever happened to you? When has someone under your supervision been better at your job than you were? How did you respond?

³ <http://crupressgreen.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/totalsurrender.pdf>

15. Describe the progression in the tactics Saul used to try to eliminate David:

- 18:10–11
- 18:17
- 18:20–25
- 19:1–7
- 19:9–10
- 19:11–24

16. What do Saul's tactics and attitudes say about his spiritual condition at this time?

17. How did Saul's jealousy of David affect Saul's other relationships? What does this say about the insidious nature of jealousy and envy?

18. What is it about the sin of jealousy that causes us to go to such lengths to satisfy its desires?

19. Have you ever been overwhelmed by feelings of jealousy, anger, or bitterness toward another person? What advice would you give to Saul on how to overcome these feelings?

20. Read 1 Peter 2:1–3. What evils seem to hang around us when we are filled with envy?

a. What other option does Peter give us instead of envying others?

b. How might meditating on the goodness of God help us to conquer the sin of envy?

Robert C. Roberts in his book ***Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues***, writes:

The Christian's self-understanding is that she is precious before God—however much a sinner, however much a failure (or success) she may be by the standards of worldly comparisons—and that every other person she meets has the same status...This vision is not only one that levels every distinction by which egos seek...glory...This vision, when appropriated, is also the ultimate ground of self-confidence. For the message is that God loves me for myself—not for anything I have achieved, not for my beauty or intelligence or righteousness or for any other “qualification,” but simply in the way that a good mother loves the fruit of her womb. If I can get that into my head—or better, into my heart—then I won't be grasping desperately for self-esteem at the expense of others, and cutting myself off from my proper destiny, which is spiritual fellowship with them.

21. How would the above quote have been good for Saul? What truths from this quote can you use this week when the temptations of envy or comparisons come into your life?