

# YOUNG DAVID'S EXAMPLE (PART 3)

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As we continue to study the excellent example of the young man David, we can learn much from his endurance of tribulation. He suffered greatly for righteousness' sake, and showed love to his enemy Saul.

## **Saul's persecution of David**

David endured much affliction for righteousness' sake, especially from king Saul. David had never sinned against Saul, but had served him faithfully (1 Sam 16:18-23; 17:32-58; 18:5,14-15,30). Saul's son Jonathan knew this to be true (1 Sam 19:4-5), and David knew it as well (1 Sam 20:1; 24:11; 26:18; Psa 59:3-4; 119:78,86,161). Saul himself confessed this fact: "*And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil*" (1 Sam 24:17). Saul turned against David because he was jealous for his throne (1 Sam 18:6-9). But it was Saul's own fault that God had decided to take away his kingdom and give it to David (1 Sam 13:14; 15:10-11,22-23,26-29; 16:13-14). Since this was God's decision, Saul had no right to resist it. Saul reneged on his promise to give his daughter Merab to David even after David had met Saul's conditions (1 Sam 18:17-19). After Saul had no choice but to give his daughter Michal to David for a wife (1 Sam 18:20-27), Saul tried to use her to destroy David (1 Sam 18:20-21; 19:11-17). Later, Saul took Michal away from David and gave her to another man (1 Sam 25:44). David endured all of that. Saul tried two times to kill David with his javelin (1 Sam 18:10-11), then tried to have David killed by the Philistines (1 Sam 18:17-21). Saul then tried to kill David with his javelin a third time (1 Sam 19:9-10). After those failures, Saul sent his servants to David's house to kill him (1 Sam 19:11-17). When David escaped from there and went to Naioth with the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 18:18), Saul sent messengers three different times to take David captive, and then went personally to take him (1 Sam 18:19-24). Next, because of Saul's relentless pursuit of his life, David had to flee to the Philistine king Achish in the city of Gath but immediately found himself in danger there and pretended to be insane in order to escape (1 Sam 21:10-22:1; Psa 34; Ps 56). David had to endure the feelings of guilt and responsibility after Saul murdered 85 priests and their family members from the city of Nob (1 Sam 21:1-10; 22:6-23; Psa 52). David had to hide in the cave Adullam for a long time (1 Sam 22:1-5; Psa 57; Psa 142). Saul then chased him from Keilah (1 Sam 23:7-13), and daily pursued him through the wilderness of Ziph (1 Sam 23:14-23). Saul chased David in the wilderness of Maon and even surrounded him there but God delivered David by sending the Philistines against Israel (1 Sam 23:24-28). Later, Saul chased David in the wilderness of Engedi where David spared Saul's life (1 Sam 23:29-24:22). Saul pursued David in the wilderness of Ziph again (1 Sam 26:1-3), and David spared Saul's life for a second time (1 Sam 26:4-25). Only when David fled to Gath of the Philistines did Saul finally give up his search for David (1 Sam 27:1-4).

## **Other sources of tribulation**

But Saul was not David's only source of undeserved affliction. David endured the betrayal of the men of Ziph on two separate occasions (1 Sam 23:19-24; Psa 54; 1 Sam 26:1-2). David also endured Nabal's inhospitable treatment (1 Sam 25:1-14), and resisted the temptation to take vengeance on Nabal (1 Sam 25:18-39). Even within his own band, David had to endure the company of wicked men. "*And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men*" (1 Sam 22:2). Speaking of these men, David said in Psalm 57:4: "*My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*" These men did not care for David's

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soul (Psa 142:4-7). David vowed to God that if the Lord would deliver him from all of this trouble, David would surround himself with only righteous men: *"Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me"* (Psa 142:7). David kept that vow after he became king (Psa 101; 119:63,74,79,115). Christians should also emulate David in his wise choice of companions (John 7:7; 1 Cor 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Gal 5:9; Jas 4:4). David also had to endure having his wives taken captive by the Amalekites (1 Sam 30:1-6), and God helped David get them back (1 Sam 30:7-19). Suffering for righteousness' sake is the pathway by which we grow spiritually to reach perfection (2 Cor 1:3-6; 2 Cor 4:16-17; 12:9-10; Gal 3:3-4, Php 3:10-15; Heb 2:10; 5:8-9; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-9). That is why it is necessary for all Christians to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake (Matt 13:21; Php 1:29; 1 Thes 3:14; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 2:21; 3:9). Suffering for righteousness' sake is how Jesus grew to be spiritually complete (Heb 2:10; 5:8-9). Christ's sufferings are our example to follow (2 Cor 13-7; 1 Pet 2:19-25) so that we can also grow to completion (Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-9). David is a great example of enduring suffering for righteousness' sake and growing spiritually as a result (Psa 119:67,71).

## **Loving one's enemies**

The ultimate goal is for us to have God's love perfected in us (1 John 2:5; 4:12,17-18). This is God's purpose for man (Matt 5:48; 10:25; Luke 6:40; Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 3:19; 4:11-13; Php 2:5-8; Col 1:27-28; 3:10; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 Pet 2:21; 4:1-2; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:4). "Perfect" literally means "complete," which means to have nothing "superfluous or lacking in his parts" (Lev 22:21-23). A major part of God's love is a love for one's enemies. God loves His enemies. The world is God's enemy (Col 1:21; Jas 4:4), yet God sends the sun and rain to all men, including the evil and the unjust (Matt 5:45). He is feeding and sustaining all His enemies on a daily basis. God "is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35). If we only love those who love us, then we are like everyone else in the world and not like God. For our love to be *complete* and to be God' children, we must love our enemies like God does (Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36). This is not easy to do, yet David as a young man demonstrated this aspect of the divine nature. David was indeed a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). David demonstrated this fact in 1 Samuel chapters 24 and 26 with the love he showed towards his enemy Saul. David had the opportunity to kill Saul on two separate occasions, but instead, David returned good for evil (see also Matt 5:38-42).

## **David's example for the Christian race**

David's displays of faith, faithfulness, courage, and endurance are a great example for Christians today. Speaking of these great examples of faith, obedience and endurance found in Hebrews chapter 11, Hebrews 12:1-4 says, *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."* We have the race set before us of becoming perfect (complete) like Christ (1 Cor 9:24-27; Php 3:11-15; 2 Tim 4:7-8). We are striving to resist and overcome all sin (Eph 6:16; Jas 3:2; 1 John 2:1; 5:4). In running this race, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, including David. We need to let David's example encourage us to lay aside every weight and sin and run our race with the endurance and faith that we see in him.