

Virtual Vestry Notes Jun 15: 1 Sam 18: 1 – 30

What I really want to talk about in this study is relationships, male relationships in particular, and what the relationships between David and Jonathan, David and Saul and David and Saul's daughters can teach us.

David and Jonathan

Verse 1 talks about a bond that forms between Jonathan and David. Verses 3 and 4 outline a covenant between Jonathan and David.

In regards to David and Jonathan's bond, I read various commentaries and they noted the following

- “as his own soul” demonstrates that the men were like-minded in their observance of God's Law and zeal for Israel.
- In regards to the covenant they made—Such covenants of brotherhood were frequent in the East. They are ratified by certain ceremonies, and in presence of witnesses, that the persons covenanting will be sworn brothers for life.”
- A covenantal context provides the lens for understanding the love between Jonathan and David.
- Jonathan was not so interested in David as a minstrel but that after David killed Goliath, Jonathan saw David's heroism and modest, manly bearing, his piety and high endowments, which kindled the flame not just of admiration, but of affection.

What does David and Jonathan's story say about male relationships? Was it special or a one off and what can we learn from it.

David and Saul

The relationship between David and Saul was the opposite of David and Jonathan. During this passage we see the almost father and son relationship between David and Saul grow steadily worse until Saul considers himself David's enemy. David on the other hand seems very altruistic in his dealings with Saul.

After David kills Goliath, Saul keeps David with him (verse 2) (one reference says Saul forcefully conscripted David into service) and then sends David out to battle. Then, verse 7 records that the women sang about Saul and his thousands and David and his ten thousands.

Comment on David's success as a warrior and Saul's jealousy that merges into increasing paranoia?

Please also comment about the evil spirit from God that came upon Saul (verse 10). (Read also 1 Samuel 10:6 and 19:23-24.) It's in this state of raving that he eventually picks up his spear and tries to kill David, but David eluded him – twice.

Verse 12-16 gives a further explanation for Saul's fear; 1) Saul begins to realise that God has left him and is with David and 2) everyone loved David, including Saul's men and the men of the army. **Please comment.**

What can we learn about David and Saul's relationship and male relationships in general?

What do we learn about men and mental health from Saul?

David and Saul's daughters

David and Merab. In verse 17, Saul offers his daughter Merab to David if he goes and fights the Philistines in the hope that the Philistines will kill David. David doesn't seem that impressed with the offer, claiming he's a nobody.

Is David being humble or deliberately avoiding getting close to Saul?

Then in verse 19 Merab was given to another when it came time to marry. **Please comment.**

David and Michal: Michal was in love with David and Saul decides to use this to trap David by offering her to David in marriage. Except that, as with Merab, David initially rejects the offer to marry Michal. Saul concocts a scheme to get rid of David, telling him he only needs one hundred Philistine foreskins as a bride price. This is the part of the story that really makes me shudder. And yet David brings the one hundred foreskins before the allotted time (more shuddering).

Why did David vow he was unworthy when he was offered first Merab to marry and then Michal to marry? Was he truly humble or was he avoiding becoming Saul's son-in-law?

Why did he eventually acquiesce to Saul's demands and do what was required to marry Michal. Do you think David returned Michal's feelings? (The passage talks about Michal's feelings but doesn't really say anything about David's feelings for Michal.)

What do these passages say about the status and treatment of women in this time?

After Saul's plans to get rid of David are foiled, David marries Michal and in verse 28, Saul realises that The Lord is no longer with him and is now with David.

Saul becomes David's enemy but in verse 30 we see David's success against the Philistines and his fame increases.

Finally

What do you think these passages teach us about love: agape love, romantic love, love twisted by jealousy and paranoia?