



DOVER DAILY DEVOTIONS

On Sunday we explored 1 Samuel 18–20 and looked closely at three contrasting hearts: Saul, Jonathan, and David. We saw how Saul’s jealousy over David’s rising favor led him down a path of fear, manipulation, and spiritual ruin. Jonathan, though the rightful heir to the throne, responded with covenant love and humility, laying aside his own future to support David because he recognized God’s hand at work. David, meanwhile, though anointed as the next king, chose not to grasp for power but to trust God’s timing, even while on the run and losing everything dear to him. Through their stories, we were invited to examine our own hearts in seasons of comparison, delay, or loss, and to follow the way of Jesus, who, like Jonathan and David, surrendered fully to the Father’s will.

Monday: The Song That Started a War

Scripture:

As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?” And Saul eyed David from that day on.

- 1 Samuel 18:6–9, ESV

Devotional:

The celebration was meant to be joyful. Goliath had fallen, Israel was safe, and the people lifted their voices in praise. But one line in the song changed everything: “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” For Saul, this was not a chorus of gratitude but a siren of threat. It pierced his pride and exposed the insecurity hiding beneath his crown.

That's how jealousy works. It takes something good, like the success of another, and turns it into a threat. Instead of celebrating what God is doing, we begin to wonder what we've lost. The blessing that should have stirred worship instead stirs suspicion. From that moment on, Saul "eyed David," and what began as a song turned into a storm that would consume him.

Comparison is one of the enemy's favorite tools. It tells us that someone else's gain is our loss, that their success means our failure. But the truth is, in the kingdom of God, we are not in competition. Our worth is not tied to applause. Our identity is not threatened by someone else's calling. Saul forgot that and it cost him everything.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever struggled with someone else's success?
2. What do you think jealousy reveals about our view of God?
3. How can you celebrate others without feeling insecure?

Prayer:

Lord, I confess the times I've let comparison cloud my joy. Help me to see others through eyes of grace, not competition. Guard my heart from jealousy, and remind me that Your plan for me is good. Teach me to celebrate what You're doing even when it's not through me. Amen.

Tuesday: The Spear of Envy

Scripture:

The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice. Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him.

- 1 Samuel 18:10-14

Devotional:

The day after the celebration, Saul's heart was heavy. He had opened the door to envy, and now it took up residence in his soul. A harmful spirit tormented him, and David came with music, just as he had in the past. But this time, Saul had a spear in his hand. Twice he hurled it at David. Twice David escaped. The king was no longer soothed by the music. He was consumed by suspicion.

Jealousy does not stay quiet. It grows. It pushes us to justify actions we once would have called wrong. Saul tried to hide his hatred behind political moves, offering his daughters, assigning dangerous missions, but the goal was the same: eliminate the one who made him feel small. The tragedy is not just in what Saul did. It is in what he refused to do. He never brought his wounded heart to God.

Scripture tells us David “had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.” Saul’s real problem wasn’t David. It was that he could no longer sense the Lord’s presence in his own life. He had traded intimacy for image. And that exchange led to a heart that could no longer rejoice in what God was doing.

Reflection Questions:

1. What do you do when others are praised and you are overlooked?
2. In what ways have you seen jealousy lead to destructive behavior?
3. How can you bring hidden resentment into the light of God’s presence?

Prayer:

Father, protect me from the bitterness that grows when I try to control outcomes. I don’t want to be ruled by fear, envy, or pride. Help me to bring my disappointments to You, and to trust Your purposes even when I feel forgotten. Create in me a clean heart. Amen.

Wednesday: The Gift of a Friend

Scripture:

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

- 1 Samuel 18:1-4, ESV

Devotional:

Jonathan saw something in David that Saul couldn’t. He saw a kindred spirit. A man of faith. A leader chosen by God. And instead of clinging to his position, Jonathan embraced David as a brother. He made a covenant of friendship, even stripping himself of his royal robe and weapons to give to David. It was more than symbolic. It was an act of surrender, honor, and humility.

Where Saul was grasping, Jonathan was giving. He wasn’t threatened by David’s calling. He didn’t view God’s plan as a rival to his own future. He recognized that the kingdom belonged to the Lord, and he

chose relationship over rivalry. That takes tremendous faith, especially when your own expectations are being rewritten by God.

Jonathan's story reminds us of what true friendship looks like. It is not self-serving. It is not competitive. It is not conditional. It mirrors the humility of Christ, who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. That is the kind of friend God calls us to be.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who in your life has shown you Christlike friendship?
2. Are you able to celebrate someone else's success without feeling diminished?
3. What would it look like to lay down your own ambitions for the sake of God's plan?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for being the friend who lays down His life for others. Teach me to walk in that same spirit. Free me from selfish ambition, and make me a person who lifts others up. Help me to love with covenant faithfulness, not just convenience. Amen.

Thursday: The Cost of Covenant

Scripture:

And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. And Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a secret place and hide yourself. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you. And if I learn anything I will tell you." And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

- 1 Samuel 19:1-7, ESV

Devotional:

When Saul commanded Jonathan to kill David, it would have been easy for Jonathan to keep silent. But covenant love does not stay quiet in the face of injustice. Jonathan risked everything to stand up for David. He confronted his father, reminded him of David's faithfulness, and pleaded for mercy. His loyalty was not just emotional. It was courageous.

Covenant always comes with cost. Jonathan could have chosen safety, kept his place in the palace, and distanced himself from David. Instead, he chose righteousness. He chose to speak up. He chose to bear the weight of another's rejection and stand in the gap.

This kind of loyalty points us to Jesus. He didn't remain in heaven. He didn't watch from a distance. He entered the mess. He stood between us and the wrath we deserved. That is the nature of true love. It intercedes, protects, and bears burdens. May we be people who walk in that kind of covenant.

Reflection Questions:

1. When have you needed a friend to defend you?
2. Who do you know that needs someone to stand with them?
3. What makes covenant love different from ordinary affection?

Prayer:

Lord, give me courage to stand up for what is right, even when it costs me. Help me be loyal, not just in words, but in action. Shape my heart to reflect Your sacrificial love. Teach me to be a friend who points others to You. Amen.

Friday: The Wound of Rejection

Scripture:

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die." Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death.

- 1 Samuel 20:30-33, ESV

Devotional:

Saul's rage boiled over. When he realized that Jonathan had chosen David, he exploded with insults and violence. He even hurled a spear at his own son. That moment wasn't just about a throne. It revealed a heart so poisoned by fear that it couldn't handle surrender. Jonathan paid the price for choosing love and truth.

Sometimes obedience to God will put us at odds with those we love. Sometimes doing what is right will be misunderstood. That is painful. Rejection cuts deep, especially when it comes from someone close.

But Jonathan chose to obey God anyway. He chose to lose a kingdom on earth in order to gain a legacy in heaven.

Jesus knew this pain. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. Yet He did not stop loving. He did not turn away. He kept walking the path of obedience. When we feel rejected for doing what is right, we are not alone. And in that place, God gives us His comfort and strength.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever been rejected for choosing what is right?
2. Why is it so hard to stand firm when family or friends oppose you?
3. How does Jonathan's story encourage you in seasons of misunderstanding?

Prayer:

Father, strengthen me when I feel alone or rejected for following You. Help me to love even when I am misunderstood. Give me the resolve of Jonathan, the courage of Christ, and the peace that comes from knowing I am walking in Your will. Amen.

Saturday: Trusting the Long Road

Scripture:

And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most. Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.'" And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

- 1 Samuel 20:41-42

Devotional:

David is on the run. He has lost his position, his home, and now his closest friend. Yet even as they part ways, Jonathan blesses him with a word of peace. Their covenant is still intact. Their love is still strong. And though the road ahead is long and uncertain, David chooses trust over bitterness.

He doesn't seize the throne. He doesn't take matters into his own hands. He waits on God. That is what sets David apart. He trusts the Lord not only for the promise, but for the process. He believes that God's timing is better than his own.

Waiting is hard. Especially when you feel ready, gifted, and overlooked. But David reminds us that God is never late. His delays are not denials. He is shaping us, preparing us, and leading us step by step. We can

rest in that. Because the One who promises is faithful.

Reflection Questions:

1. What are you waiting on God for today?
2. How can you trust Him in the process, not just the outcome?
3. What does David's restraint teach you about faith?

Prayer:

Lord, I surrender the timelines I've written in my head. Help me to trust You not just with the destination, but with every step of the journey. Give me faith like David, patience in the waiting, and joy even in the unknown. Amen.