



LET'S BEGIN HERE

The course of David's life changed the day he killed Goliath. He may have entered the field of battle an unknown shepherd boy, but he emerged a national hero. With the sling of a single stone, Goliath's body crumpled to the dirt and David's star rocketed to the sky.

News of David's victory echoed through the canyons of Judah. When the Israelite army marched home for a ticker-tape-style parade with King Saul in the lead, citizens lined the streets cheering. "Women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul" (1 Samuel 18:6a NLT). The women greeted Saul, but their voices acclaimed David.

They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals.

This was their song:

"Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands!" (1 Samuel 18:6b–7 NLT)

Their song's lopsided praise of David ignited Saul's jealous heart with hatred toward the young champion. David had done nothing against Saul, and yet, in the coming days, Saul would attempt to kill David, forcing the next rightful king of Israel to flee like a fugitive.

Even though Saul behaved in an un-kingly manner, he was still the Lord's anointed—a role that demanded respect. How would David respond to Saul: by kneeling before a king or attacking an enemy? Let's search the Scriptures to discover David's response and gain instruction for relating to those in authority over us.

Quotable

*My strong advice
that I believe we
need to hear is this:
"Stop questioning
authority, and start
respecting it."*

— Charles R. Swindoll





DIGGING DEEPER

The theme of respect for those in authority winds like a mountain stream through Scripture. Dip your hand into a few passages, and note the commands that God issues and character qualities He expects.

Passage	Commands	Qualities
Exodus 20:12		
Psalms 51:16-17		
Micah 6:8		
Romans 13:1-2		
Hebrews 13:17		

Summarize God’s teaching about respecting authority.

Our nature is to clench our fists in defiance of authority rather than lower our heads in submission, which Chuck Swindoll acknowledges in his sermon:

Isn’t it strange that everything within us screams to resist an authority figure? To resent those who are correcting us. To rebel against being told what to do or what to stop doing. The favorite words of the twenty-first century are, “I will sue you,” not, “I want to thank you. I needed that reproof.”



The roots of our *resistant*, *resentful*, and *rebellious* nature sink deep into the soil of human history, all the way to the first family. Cain's defiance of God's authority stoked a rage that led him to murder his own brother (Genesis 4:1–16). Similarly, Saul's disobedience and God's rejection of Saul as king led to his murderous hatred of David, God's next choice for king (1 Samuel 15:1–26; 16:1–13).

Read 1 Samuel 18:8–30, and write down what Saul did. Also, note David's actions in response to his king who was trying to kill him.



Searching the Scriptures Study Tool

A key principle in the *Searching the Scriptures* process is observation. As you look back through 1 Samuel 18:8–30, can you observe any repetitive themes or phrases (specifically, verses 12, 15, and 29)? What might these repetitive ideas tell you about Saul's motives and character? About David's motives and character?

David's Example of Respecting Authority

David's most dangerous opponent wasn't the nine-foot-nine-inch tall human war machine named Goliath; rather, his greatest foe was his own king, the man who at one time loved him as a son. David felled Goliath with the frontal assault of a well-placed stone. Dealing with Saul would require a different strategy for David: showing respect to Saul because Saul was the Lord's anointed *and* trusting God to take care of his enemy. The manner in which David faced Goliath and Saul required heroic faith—just different amounts of patience!



An encounter with Saul in a cave put David's respect-and-trust strategy to the ultimate test. Read 1 Samuel 24:1–4a. In this situation, what unlikely factors combined to lead David's men to conclude that the Lord had delivered Saul into David's hands to kill him?

With revenge tantalizingly feasible for David and his men, David crept toward Saul with his knife in his hand. Would David succumb to temptation and stab Saul in the back? Read what David did in 24:4b–7. What thought pricked David's conscience, and how did he communicate that to his men?

Read the dialogue between David and Saul after Saul left the cave in 24:8–22. How did David's respect win over his enemy (Proverbs 16:7)?

If David had bitten off a piece of sweet revenge and killed Saul in order to ascend to the throne, what sour aftertaste would have occurred? What may have been the consequences of his disrespect of the Lord's anointed?



David may not have plunged his knife into Saul's back, but he did break through the stony wall that Saul had erected around his heart. Reread 1 Samuel 24:8–15, noting David's confession, honest expression of feelings, and reassuring words to Saul—all characteristics of a well-handled confrontation. Has someone injured you? How can David's example help you confront your offender?



A Word about Applying Stories

Bible stories are a rich source of principles for godly living. We learn best by example, don't we? Lists of points are quickly forgotten, but the story of David's confrontation of Saul sets memorable pegs in our mind so that the next time we're dealing with a Saul-type enemy, we have some guidelines to hang on to. Just keep in mind that adjustments for context are required.

No one today is the "Lord's anointed," however, the principle of respect for authority remains true. You probably won't confess snipping the corner of a king's cloak, but you may need to confess hurting your boss with verbal snips and cutting criticisms. Consolidate key points of the story as you can, and then create principles—such as: *When confronting someone in authority, be honest about your actions and feelings, address their fears directly, and spell out your values.* David didn't stay hidden in his cave of hurt feelings; he bravely stepped into the light and spoke to his enemy. Perhaps his example will help you do the same.

Can you draw more principles from David's respectful approach to Saul?

The final scenes of Saul's life read like a Shakespearean tragedy, climaxing with Saul consulting a medium who foretold his death, being wounded by Philistine archers, and begging his aide to plunge a sword through his heart. In the end, Saul died by his own hand (1 Samuel 28; 31:1–4). David never once gloated over the death of his enemy but grieved the loss of his king Saul as much as his friend Jonathan (2 Samuel 1). David remained respectful even after Saul's death.





Bring It Home

What can we glean from this account?

- *Expect to be mistreated.* A jealous, fearful, paranoid “Saul” may enter the drama of your life’s story in any scene.
- *Anticipate feelings of revenge.* Be prepared to resist the urge to take matters into your own hands.
- *Refuse to fight in the flesh.* Enlist the Spirit of Christ as your source of strength to entrust yourself to God.
- *Determine now to leave all vengeance with God.* “Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God” (Romans 12:19 NLT).

Conclude your study of David’s respect for Saul by fortifying your soul with the following psalm and then writing a prayer to trust the Lord and leave all vengeance with Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

Don't worry about the wicked
or envy those who do wrong.
For like grass, they soon fade away.
Like spring flowers, they soon wither.
Trust in the LORD and do good.
Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.
Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you your heart's desires.
Commit everything you do to the LORD.
Trust him, and he will help you.
He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn,
and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:1–6 NLT)

My Prayer of Trust



WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES

Respecting Authority

1 Samuel 18; 24

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

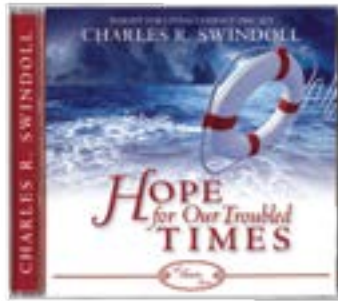
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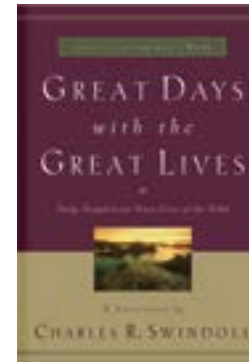
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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