

## What Happens When You Stop Walking by Faith

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### 1 Samuel 21

The Bible never flatters its heroes. It is faithful to show a hero's faults as well as his faith. 1 Samuel 21 is not a good chapter in David's life. It is almost like we are reading about a different man than the David we read about in the preceding chapters. Is this the same man who slew Goliath and killed 200 Philistines single-handed? What has happened to David's faith???

One thing you can bank on in life—Faith will always be tested! David's faith is being tested. Sadly, he is failing the test. He no longer is walking by faith, but he is walking by sight. It appears that he is out of touch with God. As a result we see him floundering in deluded thinking and demeaning conduct.

David is running scared. He is backsliding. Proverbs 14:14—*“the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways...”* In 1 Samuel 21 David is resorting to his own ways trying to manipulate his circumstances according to his own reasonings.

**Fear** has overwhelmed his faith. **Compromise** has sapped his courage. **Doubt** has overcome his determination. **Frustration** has overtaken his fortitude. He has stopped **relying on God** and now is relying on his human schemes and reasonings.

A.W. Pink wrote, “Where fellowship with the Lord is broken, the mind is no longer illuminated from Heaven, the judgment is clouded, and a lack of wisdom, yea, folly itself, will then characterize our actions.”

We all have lapses when we slip from walking by faith to walking by sight.

➡ Notice three things David did when he ceased to walk by faith:

#### I. **David began to speak the enemy's WORDS** (21:1-6).

- These were words of **deception** (v. 2). He lies to get his needs met (food and weapons). [We live in a culture that is consumed with having their “needs” met.]

➡ A strange place to seek weapons. The tabernacle was a spiritual institution that dealt with the spiritual needs of people. Often, people today expect to find the church providing things that the church is not obligated to provide (child-care; recreational centers; etc.)

- A. **A FALSE IMPRESSION** (vs. 2). David tells lie to give the priest a false impression.
1. He starts down the slippery slope of lying by getting his friend Jonathan to lie for him (20:5-6).
  2. Now he is lying to the priest at the house of God of all places. There was no need to lie. He could have told the priest the truth and left the consequences with God.
- B. **A FALSE INQUIRY** (v. 8). David lies again! The ease with which David repeatedly lies shows how easy it becomes to sin once we start down the slippery slope of sin.

➡ Once you start going down the path of sin, sinning becomes easier as you go. The farther you go, the more momentum you gain taking you farther and farther into sin.

## II. **David relies on the enemy's WEAPONS** (vs. 8-9).

- A. **FLAWED INSIGHT** (vs. 8-9). David's judgment is clouded.
1. Goliath's sword was at the tabernacle as a trophy of God's help in defeating Goliath. That sword should have reminded David to trust God Who enabled him defeat Goliath.
  2. David over estimates the value of Goliath's sword.
    - ➡ The sword did nothing to help Goliath! Instead it was used in his own defeat. Why would David resort to the weapons of an enemy that God already defeated?
    - ➡ When we walk by sight, we become enamored with weapons that are carnal.
      - The real weapons we need today are the weapons of prayer, praise, purity, and preaching of God's Word (cf. 2 Cor. 10:4).
      - Goliath's sword is not going to win our battles. We must beware of getting more excited about a sword of steel

than "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*" (Eph. 6:17).

- B. **FATAL IMPLICATION** (v. 7). Ahimelech innocently helps David. Later Saul takes out his vengeance on these priests. 85 priests are murdered because of David's lying (22:16-22).

➡ Don't let anyone ever tell you that one sin doesn't make any difference. Sin has a ripple effect. It affects more than just you!

### III. **David lived in the enemy's WORLD.** (vs. 10-12).

- David is facing another "Goliath" situation here. It is a different kind of "Goliath," but a Goliath nonetheless. When David faced the Philistine Goliath, he trusted the might of God, but here he is trusting the scheming and manipulations of the flesh.
    - ➡ God has not given us the spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7).
    - ➡ Fear of man bringeth a snare (Prov. 29:25).
- A. **The PLACE** where David flees doesn't make sense. When we walk in the flesh instead of by faith, we will not make much sense.
1. Why would he think he would be safer in Philistia than in Israel. You would think Gath would be the last place David should go—It was the hometown of Goliath (1 Sam. 17:4).
  2. He would be about as welcome there as a skunk in a perfume factory. His actions just do not make sense.
  3. When we leave God out of our thinking, our thinking will be flawed. All irrational behavior is rooted in leaving out God.
- B. **The PEOPLE** David turns to for help is wrong crowd. David was going to the world for comfort and protection. He was going to the ungodly to find help in time of trouble.
- ➡ Christians today make the same mistake by resorting to ungodly counselors and unsaved friends for help in trouble.
- C. **The PERFORMANCE** David gives is a lie. It was an act—Another lie in a series of lies. Lying always leads to more lying.

1. David pretends he's gone crazy, scratching the gate with his fingernails, foaming at the mouth, and probably blubbering away incoherently. He acts like he's a certifiable "nut case."
  - a) When you leave God out of your thinking, your actions will often appear to be "insane" and deranged.
  - b) Here is the man who has been anointed as Israel's next king... who killed a lion and a bear bare-handed... bravely slew Goliath; killed 200 Philistines single handed— Slobbering, babbling and scratching on the gate with his fingernails! Is this the man after God's own heart??? Definitely NOT one of David's finest moments!
    - ➡ "How 'bout an instant replay of this act in Heaven, David?"
  - c) Is this the way a King should act? Is this the way one of God's children should behave?
    - ➡ What kind of example do you give before God's people (vs. 1-9) and before the unsaved (vs. 10-15)?
2. Achish decides he already has more than his share of lunatics in his kingdom. "Have I need of mad men ... ?" (vs. 15).
  - ➡ Even the ungodly reject a backslider.

**SUMMATION:** Although David's little charade works, the end never justifies the means. Success does not justify acting shamefully.

Thank God, He is a God of patience and grace.

David wrote two Psalms at this time (Ps. 56 and Ps. 34). Those Psalms show that David regained his focus on God, returned to walking by faith.