

## 22. Every Crutch Removed

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Security blanket, binky, pacifier, crutch, retirement fund, and 401K. What do they have in common? They all make us to depend on those things. I am not saying that they are wrong to have around. But putting our trust on those things ONLY instead of our God can be dangerous and can be the start of idolatry.

Not everyone has broken a leg, yet we all have hurting places in our emotional bones. And we all need support when life's icy blasts threaten to blow us down. So, for our own good, God sometimes moves and takes away all our substitutes. The process is painful, but it results in stronger emotional bones and a healing that pleases Him.

### A. THE FACTS ABOUT OUR CRUTCHES

As we prepare to look at how every support in David's life fell away, let's keep in mind three facts about crutches:

#### 1) They become substitutes for the Lord.

In the midst of our troubles, the Lord offers His mighty hand to us.

*Isa 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

Patience, God waits for us to take His hand. We can't, though, when we cling to a crutch, letting the tangible take the place of God.

#### 2) They keep our focus horizontal.

Crutches can paralyze our walk of faith, because they fix our eyes on the human level. When this happens, our godly, vertical perspective that is between God and us is lost in the flat horizontal concept.

#### 3) They offer only temporary relief.

The hand of a friend on our shoulder gives us strength, but only for a time. It's not long before the house is empty, the lights are out, and the reassuring voices fade into silence.

Let's review what we learned in chapter 18. The more David succeeded, the more Saul dreaded him and the more he tried to do away with him. When he couldn't kill David himself with spears, he put him into battles where he might be killed by Philistines. When that failed, Saul's next plan was to ensnare David by having him marry his younger daughter, Michal. But when that plan backfired, now Saul put out a contract on his life in chapter 19.

### B. OPERATION CRUTCH REMOVAL

Insecure Saul launched a vendetta against David, who, eventually stripped of every support in his life, remained secure in God.

#### 1) Crutch One: David's position

*1 Sam 19:1-3 Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted greatly in David. So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place*

*and hide. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell you."*

As a result of his father's murderous order, Jonathan had to walk the dangerous line between loyalty to Saul and love for David. He chose to stand for the truth and defend his friend before the king.

We are under civil authority, and commanded to submit to God's order of authority in many different arenas. There is a Biblical, commanded submission from children to their parents, from citizens to their government, from employees to their employers, from Christians to their church leadership, and from wives to their husbands. Yet, even in all of those relationships, we are never excused from sin because we obeyed an authority that told us to sin. In this instance, it would have been wrong for Jonathan to obey his father and kill David.

*1 Sam 19:4-6 Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you. For he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?" So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed."*

Unfortunately, Saul's vows don't mean a thing to himself.

Knowing the end of the story, Saul was more accurate than he knew. Because it was God who protected David and destroyed Saul's kingdom.

*1 Sam 19:7-10 Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past. And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and struck them with a mighty blow, and they fled from him. Now the distressing spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand. Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night.*

It was David's success that aroused Saul's jealousy before. Evil spirits were more than ready to attack Saul where he was most vulnerable. Saul did not resist the temptation from them.

I think that David is naive and dumb. Not very long ago, he was in this exact situation before. De javú 127! David plays soothing music on his guitar, Saul sitting not very far from him with spear in his hand again. David dodged the spears twice already, he still didn't get a que. After Saul threw a spear for the third time, David got the point literally.

"David fled." With these words, David's life as a fugitive officially began for 20 years. No longer would he be a welcome member of the court. No longer would he command Saul's army. Saul's third, spear-throwing attack sent the man who had stood up to Goliath running for his life.

How could God allow this? It seems so unfair. It was unfair, from a human level. But God needed to make David into a man of God and a king in training, so He allowed it. Saul meant it for evil, but the Lord meant it for good. God is big enough to work all things together for good in our lives also.

## 2) Crutch Two: David's wife

*1 Sam 19:11-12 Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped.*

The king next ordered a hit squad to David's home to ambush him in the morning. Sensing danger, Michal helped her husband escape through the window, and once more David "fled". He probably told her, "Call me on my cell phone when everything is OK."

Though his wife loved David, there was never a strong spiritual tie between the two, as her later actions proved. She warned David that Saul was watching him, so together they concocted a lie. This was the beginning of serious trouble for David, for it is never right to do evil that good may come of it.

*Romans 3:8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

*1 Sam 19:13-18 And Michal took an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats' hair for his head, and covered it with clothes. So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' hair for his head. Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'"*

The image was a teraphim, a figurine used as a household idol as a fertility and good luck charm. In ancient Israel, teraphim were intended as helps in worshipping the true God. They didn't think of the teraphim as other gods, but as representing the Lord God of Israel. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, also had teraphim (called household idols in Genesis 31:19). People still have this kind of idols in contemporary religion. Often they replace true worship of our God.

In 1 Samuel 15:23, when Samuel said to Saul, "*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*" The word idolatry is the word teraphim. In the godly reforms of Josiah, he prohibited the use of household idols (1 Kings 23:24).

Clearly, God's people had no business having or using an image like this. Obviously, this household idol belonged to Michal. It shows that Michal's didn't have the kind of relationship with God she should have. And, this weak relationship with God will show up in Michal as the story of David's life unfolds (2 Samuel 6:16-23).

Michal's loyalty however, proved faulty. Unlike her brother Jonathan, Michal shrunk away from the risks of standing for the truth. She had placed her trust in her own schemes rather than in God, and her betrayal left David even more vulnerable to Saul's fury.

As David wondered around in the darkness after he escaped from the hands of Saul, he poured his heart out to God in a song. We find it in Psalm 59.

*Psalm 59:1-4 To the Chief Musician. Set to 'Do Not Destroy' A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him. Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Defend me from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from blood-thirsty men. For look, they lie in wait for my life; The mighty gather against me, Not for my transgression nor for my sin, O Lord. They run and prepare themselves through no fault of mine. Awake to help me, and behold!*

*Psalm 59:9-10 I will wait for You, O You his Strength; For God is my defense; My God of mercy shall come to meet me; God shall let me see my desire on my enemies.*

### 3) Crutch Three: David's mentor

David realized that his true defense is his God. Yet, David fled straight to Samuel, who had anointed him and to whom David looked for guidance. God's training for David just started.

*1 Sam 19:18 So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.*

After he explained to Samuel the details of Saul's pursuit, the prophet took him to his compound, called Naioth which means 'residence' in Hebrew.

*1 Sam 19:19-21 Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David is at Naioth in Ramah!" Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.*

Saul is wicked, but persistent. This reminds me "Wiley Coyote" from the Roadrunner cartoon we used to watch. That determined coyote never gives up chasing the Roadrunner after he gets crashed into a mountain side, falls off the cliff, smitten by a boulder, and burned to crisp. We can never admire the devil's work, but we should notice the devil's determination.

When it says that they were all prophesying, it isn't that they were all predicting the future. The Hebrew word, "naba" simply has the idea of speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or words from a false prophet or babbling. But They were probably all giving spontaneous and inspired praise to God.

I see two reasons for the Holy Spirit coming down on Saul's men:

**1) God was protecting David, and this was His way of "disarming" those who came to capture David.**

**2) This was the Holy Spirit's warning to these men and to Saul.**

*1 Sam 19:22 Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that is at Sechu.*

However, Saul still didn't get the message. He went after David himself.

*1 Sam 19:23-24* So he asked, and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Indeed they are at Naioth in Ramah." So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

The Spirit prompted Saul to do this as an expression of deep humility. Saul would not humble himself before God, and so God will find a way to humble him.

It is unlikely, though possible, that Saul stripped himself bare. The Hebrew word for naked can mean that a person has just stripped themselves down to their undergarments. Probably, Saul took off all of his royal robes that said "prestige" and "royalty," and laid himself out before the Lord in his plain linen undergarments. It was a way for the Lord to say, "You really aren't a king any more, Saul. I've stripped you of your royal glory."

Does this seem extreme? It is always extreme when God humbles us. That's why God counsels us to humble ourselves instead of "making" Him do it.

*1 Peter 5:6* Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time

David had to leave behind the security of his mentor, Samuel.

### **C. APPLICATIONS**

Two lessons stand out from David's humbling experience.

#### **1) Being stripped of all crutches is one of the most painful of life's experiences.**

Like those with broken legs, those whose human supports have been removed feel incredible helplessness, loneliness, and pain. Where can we go with our fears and heartaches? We need to go to our Mighty Fortress, our Strong Tower, our Shelter, Jesus. That is where we can find peace and true love in Christ. Cori Tenboom once said, "I've learned to hold everything light, because when the Lord takes them away from me, it doesn't hurt."

#### **2) There is nothing wrong with leaning if we're leaning on the Lord.**

We've got to lean on something or somebody. Life brings too many heartbreaking experiences to go it alone. But at the deepest level, we need to be leaning on God.

*Isa 25:4* For You have been a strength to the poor, A strength to the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm, A shade from the heat; For the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

*Prov 3:5-6* Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.