

THE BAIT OF SATAN: LESSON 3

My Father, My Father!

LESSON HIGHLIGHTS

The most difficult offenses we face are often not with our peers but with people in authority over us. David, who worked under King Saul, is a prime example.

There will be times when God puts us in a place where we have evidence and opportunity to expose the sin of a leader who has wronged us. He usually does this to test our hearts— to see if we'll trust Him and leave judgment in His hands.

To be a man or woman after God's own heart, we must refuse to take revenge on those who've mistreated us. As we trust that He can and will make the right decision, we'll leave vengeance to Him.

While all authority is from God, not all authority is godly. Many times we have to see beyond the leader's *behavior* and honor their God-given position.

David's deep sorrow over Saul's death displayed and confirmed the love of God at work in and through his life. As we keep ourselves in the love of God, we can avoid being offended, even with the harshest of leaders.

STEPS TO FREEDOM

STEP 11 - KNOW YOUR LEADERS

. . . Get to know those who labor among you [recognize them for what they are, acknowledge and appreciate and respect them all]—your leaders who are over you in the Lord and those who warn and kindly reprove and exhort you. —1 Thessalonians 5:12 AMP

From the beginning to the end of our lives, we will always have people in authority over us. God has handpicked leaders to be a part of shaping us into the image of Jesus. Many times our deepest offenses are with these leaders.

Stop and think—who have you worked under that was difficult to serve because of their attitudes, actions, or words? What made it hard for you to submit to their leadership?

David learned many examples of what not to do as a result of Saul's harshness. What have you learned not to do as a result of being mistreated and overlooked by those in authority?

Name a few people God has placed in your life who serve (or have served) as a spiritual father or mother. How have they influenced you? What do you appreciate most about them?

Are you struggling with offense toward one of these leaders? If so, who and why? Briefly explain.

What practical steps do you feel God is asking you to take to make things right?

"You must not lose confidence in God because you lost confidence in your pastor. If our confidence in God had to depend upon our confidence in any human person, we would be on shifting sand." —Francis A. Schaeffer

STEP 12 - FEAR THE LORD

Fear of the Lord leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm. — Proverbs 19:23 NLT

Saul and David both served as kings. Neither was perfect, but there was one characteristic David had that Saul did not—the fear of the Lord. It’s what kept David from avenging himself by killing Saul when he had the opportunity. It is what positions us to depart from evil: “. . . by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil” (Proverbs 16:6).

What is the fear of the Lord? God gives us some insights in Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and Psalm 34:11-14 (see also 1 Peter 3:8-12). Ponder these passages and write down what He shows you.

David had the chance to kill Saul more than once, but he didn’t. Check out 1 Samuel 24:1-15 and 26:7-11. What do these examples say to you about God? About David? About yourself?

Are you living in the fear of the Lord? Or has the fear of people kept you from obeying Him? How can you tell?

God gives us many promises for living in the fear of the Lord. Carefully read these verses and identify the blessings that are yours: Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs 9:10-11 and 10:27

Psalm 112:1-3 and 128:1-4

Psalm 34:9-10; Proverbs 14:26-27, 16:6, and 19:23

The fear of the Lord is not to be afraid of God; it's to be terrified to be away from Him.

STEP 13 - CULTIVATE GODLY CHARACTER

May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. —Philippians 1:11 NLT

David was a man after God's own heart. While he was overlooked by his father and looked down upon by some of his brothers, he had an inner strength and character that God was drawn to.

What was Saul like when God first called him to be king? How did he see himself? How is he described in Scripture? Carefully read 1 Samuel 9:2, 17-21, and 10:20-24 to find the answers.

According to 1 Samuel 13:1-15 and 15:1-26, what did Saul do that caused God to reject him as king and select David instead? What was he most concerned with?

Henry Blackaby has served as a pastor, church planter, and author for over four decades, passionately helping people experience God. In his book *Chosen to be God's Prophet*, he states:

"There are no substitutes for obedience Obedience to God is the key to life! It is the key to the kingdom of God (see Matthew 7:21-24). Obedience is like building your house (life) on a rock. It will not be shaken or moved when the storms of life come (see Luke 6:46-49)."

Is there an area in your life where you know you're not obeying God? If so, what is it? What can you learn from Saul's example and personally apply in your life?

God has good plans for you! But to live them out, His character has to be developed in you. Carefully read these verses and identify your part and God's part in the transformation process.

Romans 12:1-2 – Philipians 1:6; 2:12-13 – Thessalonians 5:23-24 – James 1:21-25 – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

My Part

God's Part

STEP 14 - HONOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. —1 Peter 2:17

According to Scripture, all authority is established by God. "For promotion and power come from nowhere on earth, but only from God. He promotes one and deposes another" (Psalm 75:7 TLB). Yet, while all authority is from

God, not all authority is godly. Many times we have to see beyond the person's behavior and honor their God-given position.

Carefully read Romans 13:1-7. What insights about leadership is God showing you in this passage? How does it challenge you?

Are there any people in authority in your life that you were convinced were not established by God? If so, who? Why did you feel this way? How did you treat them in response?

Under what circumstance are we not to obey human authority? Even in this situation, what should be our attitude?

Check out Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's response to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:8-18

God tells us to honor our leaders—regardless of their behavior. Take time to read these passages. Name a few practical ways to honor authority. Why does God ask us to do this? Exodus 22:28 and Ecclesiastes 10:20

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Titus 3:1-2 and 1 Peter 2:13-20

STEP 15 - KEEP YOURSELF IN GOD'S LOVE

Guard and keep yourselves in the love of God —Jude 1:21 AMP

Another way to avoid being offended with those in authority is to live in the love of God. His love gives us strength! It casts out all fear, empowers us to forgive, and enables us to release and bless those who've mistreated us.

According to Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:9-10, how does God demonstrate His love for us?

Also consider Ephesians 2:4-5.

"The springs of love are in God, not in us. It is absurd to look for the love of God in our hearts naturally; it is only there when it has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." —Oswald Chambers

God's love also enables us to see people the way He sees them and not to judge based on outward appearances or behavior. Take time to contemplate God's detailed description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. What is He showing you in this passage about His love for you and His love in you for others?

Consider reading this passage in the Amplified Bible.

Romans 5:5 tells us that ". . . God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us" (AMP). He wants His love to grow in us more and more. In your own words, describe what 1 John 4:12 and 16-17 says about how God's love matures in us.

Consider David’s reaction when he heard of Saul’s death. How does his response challenge you to walk in God’s love and change your response toward the leadership that has mistreated you?

Out of His glorious, unlimited resources He will give you the mighty inner strengthening of His Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love; and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God’s children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high His love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves —Ephesians 3:16-19 TLB

TAKE ACTION

Instead of focusing on their shortcomings, take some time to identify positive and encouraging things about this person. Thank them for the good that they do. Highlight their strengths and accomplishments. Applaud the character traits that you admire about them.

This action is designed to help you overcome criticalness of your leaders. Hopefully, your thoughts will begin to shift from the negatives things your leader has done to the positive things they do or could do. This will help keep your heart clean and pure toward your leader.

Once you’ve finished the card, seal it in an envelope and either send it to your leader or leave it in a place where they will find it. Consider whether it would be best for you to remain anonymous.

FINAL THOUGHTS . . .

All of us will have opportunities to be offended with and expose leaders who’ve hurt us and made mistakes. God allows this test—to see if we’ll take matters into our own hands or trust Him to bring vengeance.

Seize this opportunity to identify the leaders in your life who’ve treated you like Saul treated David—attacking and falsely accusing you at every turn. How have you thought and spoken of them? What changes do you feel God

is asking you to make in your thoughts, words, and attitudes? Pour your heart out on paper, capturing the insight He gives you.