

## CONFLICT WITH DOUBT

**Open:** Nine quotes concerning doubt

**Text:** **1 Samuel 21**

**Key verse** **Sam. 21:1**

Ahimelech was alarmed as he went out to greet David: *What are you doing here all by yourself and not a soul with you?*

Ahimelech the Priest was surprised because David was a Commander over many soldiers

David is already at this point plagued with doubt and confusion ...

Doubt likes to hide in the shadows of our consciousness - but when circumstances are right – it becomes bold and defiant ... pointing an accusing finger at whomever it can

- The loyalty or competency of Others
- Our self worth
- Our lot in life –the poor me syndrome
- Even at God ... challenging His faithfulness and questioning His love for you

**Doubt is** rarely, constructive - it erodes confidence and casts a disparaging light on others

Success in life is generally an uphill fight but it's amazing how quickly and easily we slide downward after a series of small but poor decisions. That's when doubt loves to pounce!

**Personal experience** ... At the end of every Defensive Driving class I hand out a critique to evaluate the teacher's performance: they are generally positive except for this one review ...

David's struggles with doubt lead to panic

The same man who confidently defeated Goliath was now running for his life.

David's most sensational battle with the 10' giant probably lasted only minutes

His struggle with King Saul lasted for ten long years

Challenges that drag on for long periods of time are the most difficult to deal with

- A long illness often leads to depression
- Mistakes from the past that continue to haunt the present
- Wedges between families that drag on for generations
- prolonged and relentless attacks on your reputation

David, **the man after God's own heart**, buckled under the pressure of being hunted like an animal

He's a fugitive running for his life ... even though he'd done nothing wrong.

David lost his spiritual orientation wondering if God still cared about him.

☆ I recently spoke to a friend who said he felt disconnected from God

He's been going through a long drawn out life challenge ... He was disillusioned and discouraged and hinted that he had stopped praying

He felt that either God wasn't listening or He no longer cared

Have you been there? We all have.

Lauren Daigle's song "**Trust in You**" focuses on this kind of struggle

When You don't move the mountains  
I'm needing You to move  
When You don't part the waters  
I wish I could walk through  
When You don't give the answers  
As I cry out to You  
I will trust, I will trust, I will trust in You

King Saul was obsessed with killing David ... it was all he could think about!

When David failed to attend a banquet dinner for the second straight evening – Saul turned on his own son Jonathan ...

## 1 Samuel 20: 27-33 MSG

<sup>27</sup> But the day after the New Moon, day two of the holiday, David's seat was still empty. Saul asked Jonathan his son, "So where's that son of Jesse? He hasn't eaten with us either yesterday or today."

<sup>28-29</sup> Jonathan said, "David asked my special permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, 'Give me leave to attend a family reunion back home. My brothers have ordered me to be there. If it seems all right to you, let me go and see my brothers.' That's why he's not here at the king's table."

<sup>30-31</sup> Saul exploded in anger at Jonathan: "You son of a slut! Don't you think I know that you're in cahoots with the son of Jesse, disgracing both you and your mother? For as long as the son of Jesse is walking around free on this earth, your future in this kingdom is at risk. Now go get him. Bring him here. From this moment, he's as good as dead!" <sup>32</sup> Jonathan stood up to his father. "Why dead? What's he done?" <sup>33</sup> Saul threw his spear at him to kill him. That convinced Jonathan that his father was fixated on killing David.

Jonathan and David friendship was legendary – Jonathan initiated a covenant with David even though he knew it meant he'd never become king.

David was popular and powerful - he could have staged a military coup

Highlights the difference between David and Saul ...

David knew the kingdom wasn't his to take – while Saul refused to give up what God had already stripped him of

At 17 David's a national hero at 20 he's running for his life

How quickly things can turn around!

David went from golden boy to the number 1 most wanted list

Put yourself in David's shoes for a moment – maybe it won't be too hard

- You've committed your heart to God your life has changed
- things are great you're blessed people you come in contact with are blessed
- Suddenly everything changes
- The people who cared about you turn on you
- Everything turns to sawdust
- You're left wondering what went wrong
- What happened to that promise that God made to you?
- Doubt comes rushes in telling you you're nothing but a loser
- And if you continue to listen to it... doubt will leave you bitter and confused

That's what David was battling - maybe you are too

### **Consider this:**

- God was thinking of us when David went through his crisis years
- God allowed David's struggle because he knew that you would be facing battles and doubts of your own
- You'd know that if God could deliver David all his battles he could deliver you too
- It's in our battles that we discover God is greater than all our doubts and fears
- Because through it all God is always present

In response to an angry culture lashing out at God Eugene Peterson writes:

We can take the Bible out of the hotel room, take prayer from the schoolroom, take the Ten Commandments of the courtroom, and we haven't diminished his presence in any of those places. We can take his name off the coins and he is no less a present reality than before. We can deny him, we can curse him, we can ignore him and his is still intimately acquainted with all of our ways, still tenderly holding us in his love, still faithfully extending his mercy to us, and still generously offering us his grace.

### **David in Panic Mode**

David's life appears to be a contradiction: He's trusting God but fleeing for his life

#### **1 Samuel 21: 1-7**

David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the Priest. Ahimelech was alarmed as he went out to greet David: "What are you doing here all by yourself—and not a soul with you?"

<sup>2-3</sup> David answered Ahimelech the Priest, "The king sent me on a mission and gave strict orders: 'This is top secret—not a word of this to a soul.' I've arranged to meet up with my men in a certain place. Now, what's there here to eat? Do you have five loaves of bread? Give me whatever you can scrounge up!"

David lies to the priest about a secret mission taking food and the sword of Goliath then escapes into the land of his enemies the Philistines but when he's recognized - pretends to be a drooling madman.

His panic leads to bad decisions and lies resulting in the slaughter of Ahimelech the Priest who aided him along with eighty-four other priests still in their sacred robes.

Doeg the king's henchman continues into Nob, the city of priests, killing: men, women, children, babies, animals, everything.

Thankfully the story doesn't end there

## **David shifts from panic to prayer mode**

On his way back to Judah David pens Psalm 34

### **Psalm 34: 17-20**

<sup>17</sup> Is anyone crying for help? GOD is listening,  
ready to rescue you.

<sup>18</sup> If your heart is broken, you'll find GOD right there;  
if you're kicked in the gut, he'll help you catch your breath.

<sup>19</sup> Disciples so often get into trouble;  
still, GOD is there every time.

<sup>20</sup> He's your bodyguard, shielding every bone;  
not even a finger gets broken.

### **Let's summarize what David learned from failure:**

1. Even anointed people can fail if they panic rather than pray
2. Sin always increases a problem, never diminishes it
3. Where failure abounds, grace abounds even more. God didn't forsake David despite his doubt and deceit and he won't forsake you ... ever!

David learned that God was with him in the middle of his conflict.

### **Have you lost your way with God recently?**

Sometimes it helps when we put big problems into smaller context:

Listen to this writing by Maureen, a local young woman who lives right here in the Town of Brookhaven

See other attachment for Maureen's experience

## Maureen's potent experience

Herbert

That's your name

I've passed you countless times.

I've seen you.

I've spent countless split seconds thinking how "one day" I'd like to serve the poor.  
Like you.

Just not today.

Once I gave you a Starbucks gift card.

You graciously accepted it but chuckled as you commented how expensive Starbucks was.

I felt dumb...so I haven't given you much thought since then.

Seeing you made me a little uncomfortable Because you are a reminder that my "some day" could  
be today if I chose for it to be.

There was nothing stopping me from helping the poor...

Except it was uncomfortable.

I fooled myself into thinking it was not yet "my time"...

But today I passed you again.

I felt God speak to me and tell me to talk to you...

And I drove away.

I wrestled with Him

Told Him I was uncomfortable

He told me "ask him what he needs".

So I took a deep breath and turned around.

I wondered what your reply would be.

Would you want shoes, money, a gift card, a meal...

I opened the window

"Hi there, is there anything I can pick up for you while I'm shopping?"

"Juice would be good, orange juice"

"You got it"

Juice.

Not booze. Not money. Not a wardrobe.

Not a Jesus prayer, not a lecture.

The man just wanted juice.

I have never spent so long contemplating orange juice but finally I picked the "perfect one".

I drove up to you, rolled down the window, and presented you with the juice.

You humbly smiled and thanked me.

Your eyes sparkle. I can tell you are wise.

I asked your name.

Herbert.

"I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink" Matthew 25:35

There's nothing radical about juice

There's nothing radical about what He asks of us.