

# SESSION 2

# IT'S NOT ABOUT ME





*How far are you willing to go to  
get your own way?*



## THE POINT

*Conflict can arise when I'm thinking only of myself.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I had a roommate problem when I was in college. I wanted the apartment kept clean; he kept the place messy. I worked full-time, in addition to classes, so I wanted quiet nights. He was a socialite and packed the place with friends. I wanted the window blinds open for natural light. He wanted the blinds closed for privacy. Even as great friends, we created constant tension and conflict for one another.

It wasn't until I was married that I realized why we had roommate problems. As my wife and I built a household and marriage, I recognized a flaw in myself: I wanted things my way. At the heart of much conflict is the desire to get my way. To build a healthy marriage, I often have to drop what I want to take on my wife's desires. I have to consider her interests above my own. She had to do likewise.

Saul and David, two leaders in Israel, lived in conflict because of self-centeredness. In Saul we'll see a man driven by his own self-interests. In David we'll see a man who refused to take a self-centered approach.



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## 1 Samuel 24:1-15 (HCSB)

**1** When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness near En-gedi." **2** So Saul took 3,000 of Israel's choice men and went to look for David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

**3** When Saul came to the sheep pens along the road, a cave was there, and he went in to relieve himself. David and his men were staying in the back of the cave, **4** so they said to him, "Look, this is the day the LORD told you about: 'I will hand your enemy over to you so you can do to him whatever you desire.'" Then David got up and secretly cut off the corner of Saul's robe. **5** Afterward, David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe. **6** He said to his men, "I swear before the LORD: I would never do such a thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed. I will never lift my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed." **7** With these words David persuaded his men, and he did not let them rise up against Saul. Then Saul left the cave and went on his way.

**8** After that, David got up, went out of the cave, and called to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed to the ground in homage.

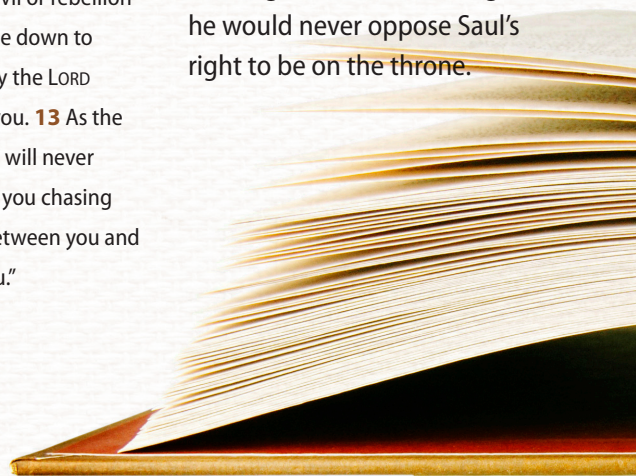
**9** David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look, David intends to harm you'?" **10** You can see with your own eyes that the LORD handed you over to me today in the cave. Someone advised me to kill you, but I took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD's anointed. **11** See, my father! Look at the corner of your robe in my hand, for I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. Look and recognize that there is no evil or rebellion in me. I haven't sinned against you even though you are hunting me down to take my life. **12** "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but my hand will never be against you. **13** As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' My hand will never be against you. **14** Who has the king of Israel come after? What are you chasing after? A dead dog? A flea? **15** May the LORD be judge and decide between you and me. May He take notice and plead my case and deliver me from you."

## Key Words

**relieve himself** (v. 3) – Literally translated as "cover his feet," this expression was a Hebrew idiom for answering the call of nature.

**the LORD's anointed** (v. 6) – Refers to the anointing process both Saul and David had gone through when God chose them to lead the people. The prophet would anoint them with oil. David refused to go against the Lord's anointing on Saul as long as Saul was alive. He patiently waited his turn to be king.

**my hand will never be against you** (v. 13) – David pledged he would not lift his hand against Saul, meaning he would never oppose Saul's right to be on the throne.





## 1 Samuel 24:1-2

David, God's preordained future king, had great success in battle. He became the celebrated hero of the Israelites. Saul, the current king, was angered that his people sang the praises of David's battle victories over his own victories.

Saul's ongoing jealousy and hatred against David led him to pursue David. David went into hiding. Saul's desire to get what he wanted or to have things his way caused pain to himself, to David, and to the kingdom Saul was assigned to lead. While Saul should have been ruling a kingdom, Saul was chasing after David in a rage of anger.

In the previous chapter, it appeared Saul was closing in on David (1 Sam. 23:26). Just when we might believe the end is near, the scales tipped in David's favor.

Life can be like that. Just when I believe all hope is gone, God comes through with a twist of events. I have learned not to consider a life story complete until God puts the period behind "The End."

David was currently the more popular leader. But Saul still had confidants ready to protect him. One of them apparently told Saul where to find David.

It is interesting that Saul took 3,000 of "Israel's choice" men. Powerful king Saul needed 3,000 men to chase a former shepherd boy with limited battle experience. David had a team of misfits as his army (1 Sam. 22:1-2).

But Saul was determined to find and destroy David.

*What do you do if the person in conflict with you is the one being selfish?*

### QUESTION #1





"Selfishness is when we pursue gain at the expense of others!"

—RANDY ALCORN

***What are some signs that someone's behavior is out of line?***

**QUESTION #2**

## **1 Samuel 24:3-7**

You can't help but address the humor in this passage. Saul went in the cave "to relieve himself." He had been traveling; there weren't roadside convenience stores along the way; and Saul had to go to the bathroom. It's a poignant reminder that we are all human. Saul was an appointed king of God. He was ruler of a nation. He was the most powerful man in the land. Even so, Saul was merely a human being.

David and his men were in the back of that very cave. It's as if Saul was handed to David on a silver platter. Some opportunities seem so incredibly obvious that we think God must have given them to us.

David secretly cut off the corner of Saul's robe. It is interesting that David's conscience bothered him for this. He had backed away from what he could have done. He could have taken Saul's life. He didn't. So what was so bad? In the customs of the day, cutting off a piece of Saul's robe was symbolic. This was the robe only to be worn by a king. When David cut off a piece of Saul's robe it represented taking a piece of Saul's authority. He assumed power from Saul, which was God's to grant, not David's to grab.

David had been anointed king, but he had not yet been positioned as king. Taking matters into his own hands weighed heavily on David's conscience. The fact that David was led by his conscience showed his character of humility and the influence His relationship with God had on his life.

Consider how your relationship with God alters the way you use your power and influence. David used a good leadership skill here. He persuaded his men not to rise up against Saul. David persuaded his men because it wasn't about him. David was just a man under God's authority.





## **1 Samuel 24:8-15**

Acts of humility are contagious. I've spent the majority of my life in a military town. I was proud to be in the community and to spot a man or woman in uniform. I knew they had sacrificed part of themselves and their family to protect my right to worship freely. No one is currently forced to sign up for this job which puts them in harm's way, makes them face constant deployments, or limits their freedom to choose where they live. People choose to serve through the military. It humbles me. The humility of David shows the difference in Saul's approach to leadership and David's approach to leadership:

- ▶ Saul worked to protect his kingdom. He tried to kill David.
- ▶ David was able to remove himself from the equation long enough to see a bigger picture.
- ▶ It might have made sense for David to take Saul's life. Saul was his enemy.
- ▶ David understood that God was in charge of his destiny.

***What tempts people to take matters into their own hands?***

**QUESTION #3**



David's bold pursuit of Saul is humbling. He could have remained hidden in the cave. That could have been the end of the story. It isn't. What David did next is rather amazing. David spared Saul's life without Saul even knowing it.

David had already humbled himself before God and his men. Nothing else was needed. He could have escaped and been safer than before this incident. As a man of God, David felt there was more he needed to do. David felt led to apologize to Saul for usurping part of his power.

In verses like these we see why God might have considered David a man after His own heart. Consider when you've recognized that it's ultimately more about God than about you.

***What do you find challenging in David's attitude and behavior?***

**QUESTION #4**

## WHAT ABOUT ME?

*Your boss offers you a considerable bonus for an idea he thinks you created, but your colleague really did most of the work.*

A Christ-centered reaction would benefit me by:

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A Christ-centered reaction would benefit my colleague by:

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A Christ-centered reaction would benefit my family by:

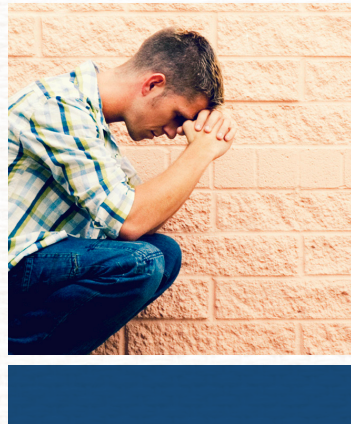
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# LIVE IT OUT

The higher we elevate our own needs and desires ahead of others, the more we feed conflict. We get defensive and angry when things don't go our way. Instead, let's elevate God's agenda.

- ▶ **Don't make the issue about yourself.** Work to see the other person's viewpoint.
- ▶ **Admit when you've been self-centered.** Acknowledge to the other person where you have erred in the conflict.
- ▶ **Support the other person.** Even if you have the right stance in the conflict, find a way to tangibly encourage the other person.



Whether it's roommates, spouses, or the person sitting next to you, see how far you can go to make it not about yourself. **Make it about God.**

## At Your Service



*For me, the journey to a good marriage began with an academic exercise and ended with spiritual renewal. I was a graduate student in seminary, studying to be a pastor and saying to God, "This is not going to work. There's no way I can be this miserable in my marriage and preach hope to people!" Then I thought: "What if I did an in-depth study of the teachings of Jesus and then sought to apply them to my marriage?" In retrospect, it was one of the most profound thoughts I've ever had.*



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My group's prayer requests

A series of 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

My thoughts