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# DAVID'S HOPE AND SONG

*by Daniel A. Brown, PhD*

King David, a man after God's own heart, had a life full of ups and downs. If you read any of the poems/songs he wrote in Psalms, you quickly discover that he, too, was a man well acquainted with grief, disappointment, betrayal and discouragement. Yet, he kept entrusting his life to God.

The Book of 1 Samuel spans the lifetime of the prophet Samuel and the first king of Israel, Saul. Though both these men figure prominently in the narrative, it is actually King David who occupies the central role.

David comes on the scene following a difficult time in Israel's history—the nation has been in a protracted war with the Philistines, and it has rejected the prophetic/spiritual rule of Samuel in favor of a secular/kingly rule, where Saul becomes king. Saul turns out to be willful and disobedient to God's specific instructions, so God rejects him from being king.

David is a shepherd, the youngest of eight sons whose musical talents land him in Saul's court. Not long after, he kills a huge man (roughly nine feet tall), and becomes best friends with Saul's son, Jonathan. But Saul's sense of his own failure, coupled with the anointing he senses on David, is enough to turn Saul against David to the point where Saul conspires to murder David more than once.

Though David is married to Michal, Saul's daughter—Saul comes to take David's life—so, David must flee and hide out in the wilderness. While in the wilderness, David passes up a chance to murder Saul because he recognizes that would be

taking his salvation into his own hands. Instead, he flees again, meets and marries beautiful Abigail. Once more Saul falls into David's hands, and David again chooses not to take his own revenge.

That of course means again he has to flee into the land of the Philistines. They ultimately suspect him of double-dealing, and they reject him. About this time, the traditional enemy of God's people (the Amalekites), raids David's camp while he and the men are gone. The Amalekites carry away David's wealth and his family, but God gives David a way to recover all that had been plundered from him.

Within the bookends in these stories, we watch Saul and Jonathan killed in a final defeat at the hands of the Philistines. Though David's story will continue in 2 Samuel, we already see how full of pain and trial David's life is. From the sweetest moments to darkest days, David cries out and makes God His refuge. It is not a cliché or a pat answer for David. Fleeing in his heart to God and to His Word is the only way to survive.

Like us, David felt hopeless, bitter, confused, afraid, jealous, controlling, excited, defeated, overwhelmed and alone. His songs and his actions came from the deep conviction:

*"Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works." Psalm 73:25-28*