



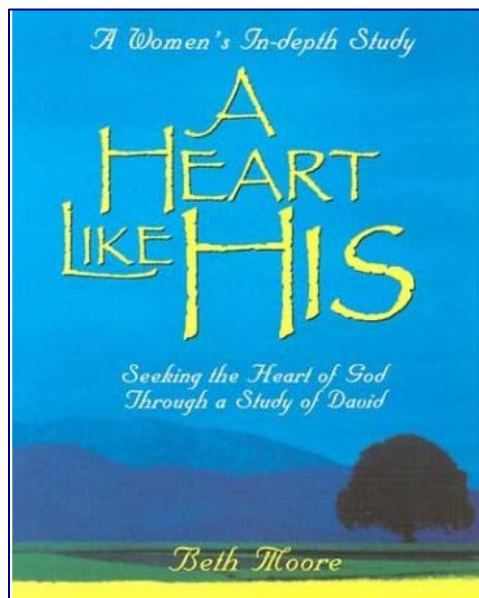
DEAN WELCH - TEACHER

DEALING WITH THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER
[1 SAMUEL 17-21]

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

MARCH 2, 2008

FROM THE *MASTER WORKS* SERIES STUDY OF:



DEALING WITH THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

[1 SAMUEL 17-21]

Today we begin a new 8-week series of lessons from *A Heart Like His*, Beth Moore's in-depth study on the life of David—*"a man after God's own heart."* In these lessons, we will take an intimate, exciting journey through many of the astonishing episodes of David's remarkable life. From shepherd, to refugee, to king of Israel, David exhibited the purest virtues and the most heinous sinfulness. But through it all, his relationship with the Lord continued to grow. *A Heart Like His* looks at this bond of mutual love and admiration from today's perspective and draws spiritual insight and understanding from a man who boldly fulfilled his divine destiny.

I start this morning with four stories. Story #1 is from **Genesis 4:1-10**. There once was a man named Adam and a woman named Eve. In fact, they were the first people created by God. Genesis chapter 4 tells us that Adam and Eve had children. She gave birth to a son and named him Cain. She gave birth to another son and named him Abel. Verse 2 of Genesis 4 explains to us that these boys were very different from one another. Cain was a farmer. Abel worked with the flocks. Cain brought an offering to the Lord as did Abel, but Cain's offering was not accepted by God. Verse 7 says, "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." God told Cain that sin was crouching at his door. God told Cain that he must master the temptation to sin. He did not. Cain led his brother Abel out into a field and killed him. He killed him and even lied to God about it.

(Genesis 29-30) There is another story in the Bible about a man named Jacob. Jacob sets out to find a wife and arrives at the house of Laban. Laban has two daughters: Leah and Rachel. Jacob meets Rachel first and falls deeply in love with her. Genesis 29:18 tells us that Jacob struck a bargain with Laban for Rachel. Jacob would work for Laban for seven years. Verse 20, the mushiest verse in the Bible tells of their love, *"So Jacob served seven years to get*

Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her." Somehow Laban tricks Jacob into marrying Leah who is the older of the two. He stated it was the custom to give the older daughter in marriage before the younger. Jacob married Rachel as well in return for seven more years of labor (29:30). Leah was quite a fertile woman and gave birth to four sons right away. Rachel is beside herself that she is not bearing children for Jacob. She even says to Jacob in 30:1, *"Give me children, or I'll die!"* Basically, through the rivalry between Leah and Rachel and their respective handmaidens, Jacob has twelve sons and one daughter and a very unhappy home life.

There is an old story about two shopkeepers were bitter rivals. Their stores were directly across the street from each other, and they would spend each day keeping track of each other's business. If one got a customer, he would smile in triumph at his rival. One night an angel appeared to one of the shopkeepers in a dream and said, "I will give you anything you ask, but whatever you receive, your competitor will receive twice as much. Would you be rich? You can be very rich, but he will be twice as wealthy. Do you wish to live a long and healthy life? You can, but his life will be longer and healthier. What is your desire?" The man frowned, thought for a moment, and then said, "Here is my request: Strike me blind in one eye!"

(Genesis 37:1-11) Jacob has another story about him a few chapters later in Genesis that is also interesting. Genesis 37 tells the story of Joseph. Genesis 37:3 says, "Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him." The other brothers were not pleased when they saw Joseph prancing around in his new robe. The brothers hated him because Jacob played favorites. The brothers could not speak a kind word to him because they knew Jacob loved Joseph more than them (Genesis 37:4). Eventually, the brothers fake Joseph's death and sell him into slavery.

There is a fable of an eagle which could out fly another, and the other didn't like it. The latter saw a sportsman one day, and said to him: "I wish you would bring down that eagle." The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers, and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly, and then the sportsman turned around and killed him.

What do all of these stories have in common? What they have in common is the same thing they have in common with our introductory lesson this week. The title on the board says it all. It's how we deal with the "green-eyed monster" known as jealousy. But, let's not forget the other side of that is extreme loyalty. We all experience both extreme jealousy as well as extreme loyalty in our relationships, don't we? I pray that you have spent much time this week searching God's Word and brushing up on David as he experienced this extreme loyalty of Jonathan and also the extreme jealousy of Saul. You should have read most of 1 Samuel 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 this week, as we just don't have time to read it all today. If you've looked at the newspaper this morning or even this past week, you'll see one example after the other of loyalty as well as of jealousy and even disloyalty. So how do we deal with loyalty or the lack of it in our day-to-day interactions? **How does a person's loyalty or disloyalty affect our attitudes?**

Open your Bible and let's begin reading with **1 SAMUEL 17:55** through **1 SAMUEL 18:4 (NIV)**: *⁵⁵As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young man?" Abner replied, "As surely as you live, O king, I don't know." ⁵⁶The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is." ⁵⁷As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head. ⁵⁸"Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him. David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem." (1 Samuel 18) ¹After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with*

David, and he loved him as himself. ²From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. ³And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

So, how would you describe David's feelings for Jonathan and Jonathan's feeling for David?

Do you have a relationship like that? A best friend, maybe? Think about those feelings and what he or she would be willing to do for you. Notice in these verses that David is becoming quite the success story. Defeating Goliath was only the beginning (1 Samuel 17). David gains an important friend in the royal household. Jonathan, son of King Saul, befriends David and they become fast friends. Jonathan becomes his advocate and ally in the royal court. The picture we get are two young men who become very good friends.

Now, let's change the spirit here and look at the other side. Continuing with **1 SAMUEL 18:5-16 (NIV)**, follow along as I read: *⁵Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well. ⁶When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. ⁷ As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." ⁸Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" ⁹And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.*

¹⁰The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand ¹¹and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice. ¹²Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD

was with David but had left Saul. ¹³So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. ¹⁴In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. ¹⁵When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. ¹⁶But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.

Now, for a moment, think back on the passage we read earlier about Jonathan and compare it with what we just read about Saul. **Why the jealousy? Did David do anything wrong here? Well, could he have done anything to have prevented this conflict?**

Look again at verse 5, *“Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well. **Is it possible to be so successful (verse 5) at work that it irritates the boss? Has anyone ever seen anything like this?***

Verses 6 and 7 record for us the problem that develops between Saul and David. The soldiers were returning home and news of Goliath's defeat reaches everyone. This is big news! After 40 days of challenges, Goliath is dead and Israel wins! The women of the towns were celebrating and singing of the victory. Saul did not like what he heard. Saul, the king, should have been the leader of the victory, but he was not. David was and the women sang of the victory of David.

Look back up at verse 8 and tell me **what would be the Christian thing for Saul to do with these feelings?**

I want you to notice verse 9 because it ties together all the stories I have told you this morning and presents the entire point of this passage from 1 Samuel 18. Saul was what? Saul was jealous of David. I want you to notice the process that Saul went through to arrive at jealousy. It is most likely the same path that we all take on the road to jealousy: *Step 1: Sin of Self-Centeredness = Saul should have been the one to defeat Goliath and not sent a child.*

Step 2: Anger = Saul was angry that David got more hype than him.

Step 3: Galled = perceived injury on the part of Saul from David, though it did not exist.

Step 4: Jealousy

I would also like you to see in verse 10 that Saul tried to kill David. There's an interesting phrase in verse 10, "*An evil spirit from God.*" **Who can explain that?** Perhaps you have a study Bible with a footnote. (My Bible has a simple reference that says, or "*injurious.*") We see what happens here, I think, when the spirit of God departs a person. They become like Saul, envious, suspicious, ill-natured, jealous and mean-spirited, seeking injury. His jealousy escalated to murder. Saul missed spearing David twice. I also want you to see that Saul had no hope of dealing with this because the Lord had left him. The Lord had left him because he was constantly disobeying and choosing to go his own way.

Compare David, with his harp in his hand, aiming to serve Saul, and Saul, with his javelin in his hand, aiming to slay David; and observe the sweetness and usefulness of God's persecuted people, and the barbarity of their persecutors.

How **far** was Saul willing to go to destroy his perceived enemy, David? Saul chose to use his very own daughter as part of his plot. Let's continue with our story and see what happened in **1 SAMUEL 18:17-30 (NLT)**: *¹⁷One day Saul said to David, "I am ready to give you my older daughter, Merab, as your wife. But first you must prove yourself to be a real warrior by fighting the Lord's battles." For Saul thought, "I'll send him out against the Philistines and let them kill him rather than doing it myself." ¹⁸"Who am I, and what is my family in Israel that I should be the king's son-in-law?" David exclaimed. "My father's family is nothing!" ¹⁹So when the time came for Saul to give his daughter Merab in marriage to David, he gave her instead to Adriel, a man from Meholah.*

²⁰In the meantime, Saul's daughter Michal had fallen in love with David, and Saul was delighted when he heard about it. ²¹"Here's another chance to see him killed by the Philistines!" Saul said to himself. But to David he said, "Today you have a second chance to become my son-in-law!" ²²Then Saul told his men to say to David, "The king really likes you, and so do we. Why don't you accept the king's offer and become his son-in-law?" ²³When Saul's men said these things to David, he replied, "How can a poor man from a humble family afford the bride price for the daughter of a king?" ²⁴When Saul's men reported this back to the king, ²⁵he told them, "Tell David that all I want for the bride price is 100 Philistine foreskins! Vengeance on my enemies is all I really want." But what Saul had in mind was that David would be killed in the fight.

²⁶David was delighted to accept the offer. Before the time limit expired, ²⁷he and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines. Then David fulfilled the king's requirement by presenting all their foreskins to him. So Saul gave his daughter Michal to David to be his wife. ²⁸When Saul realized that the Lord was with David and how much his daughter Michal loved him, ²⁹Saul became even more afraid of him, and he remained David's enemy for the rest of his life. ³⁰Every time the commanders of the Philistines attacked, David was more successful against them than all the rest of Saul's officers. So David's name became very famous.

What do we learn about David's character and heart from this story? Look again at verses 25 and following. David was clearly very hesitant to become the king's son-in-law. What changed his mind?

On page 13, Beth Moore says Jonathan was an important part of God's plan. He played a difficult instrument to play: second fiddle. Why was this especially difficult for Jonathan to play second fiddle? (BECAUSE HE WAS THE KING'S SON. HE HAD MORE RIGHT TO THE THRONE THAN DAVID.) Why is second fiddle such a difficult instrument for anyone to play?

Beth Moore draws some important lessons about friendship from this story about Jonathan and David. What can we learn about being a friend from David and Jonathan? What do you think are the most important qualities of a friend?

CONCLUSION: The steps that Saul took to arrive at jealousy can be steps that we take as well!

Step 1: Sin of Self-Centeredness = We think of ourselves and our abilities above all others

Step 2: Anger = We are angry that someone challenges us or questions us

Step 3: Galled = perceived injury on the part of you from someone else, even though it is untrue

Step 4: Jealousy

Or we can follow another route. David needed reminders that God was on his side. He was surrounded by reminders that God was present in his struggles, namely the sword of Goliath and the bread of the presence.

Listen to these words from **Romans 13:12-14**, *"The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."*

Many of us have friends, but do we have the kind of friends which God desires for us to have? Do we have a Jonathan in our life?

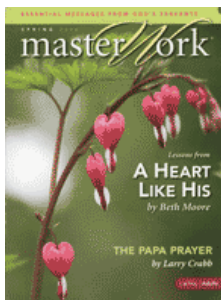
Proverbs 18:24 says, *"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."* Do we have friends who sticks closer than a brother? Who care for us enough to sacrifice for us, do we have a friend who encourages us, builds us up, and prods us along in our relationship with God. Do you have a friend who is honest with you, and sticks with you

through thick and thin? Is there a Jonathan in your life whom you can share your deepest concerns, and not judge you, someone you can trust to be there in the worst of times?

Or even better yet are you being a Jonathan to your friends? We must be a Jonathan before we can expect others to be Jonathan's for us. We're all looking for these kind of friendships but are we willing to be the kind of people that others want to be friends with? Are our friends better because they've been our friends?

But we won't automatically be this kind of friend. The only way to be this kind of a friend is to first be a friend in Jesus.

Let's pray!



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