

**David's Foolishness**

David is actually at the end of his troubles with Saul, yet he does not know it. He does a foolish thing when he joins the Philistines<sup>□1</sup>. It is entirely unnecessary. Saul had given up his enmity towards David<sup>□2</sup>.

□1 27:1  
□2 27:4

1. He allowed himself to fall into unbelief

1. **He allowed himself to fall into unbelief.** Despite all that God had done for him and the many times he had been rescued he was saying to himself *'I shall be destroyed by the hand of Saul'*<sup>□1</sup>.

□1 27:1

2. He was leaning on his own understanding

2. **He was leaning on his own understanding.** *'The best thing I can do,'* he reasoned with himself, 'will be to escape to the Philistines'<sup>□1</sup>. The Christian uses his mind, but the Christian does not trust his mind. It is easy in a time of difficulty to jump prematurely into our own devices. Our own devices can lead us into extraordinary entanglements.

□1 27:1

3. He took others with him into his folly

3. **He took others with him into his folly.** His six hundred close allies and their families went with him<sup>□1</sup>. It led David into many evils. 1 Samuel 27:4 may be translated *'And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, but he did not seek him again any more.'* The extra word in the Hebrew, *'any more,'* suggests not that Saul gave up seeking David because he was at Gath but that Saul would never again be seeking David. David's troubles with Saul were at an end.

□1 27:2-3

4. David began to live a double life

4. **David began to live a double life.** He asked for a place to live<sup>□1</sup>. To dwell in the royal city of Gath might suggest that he has secret plans to attack the city. It would also hinder the secret plans he had to raid Philistine areas. He was given Ziklag<sup>□2</sup> and for sixteen months spent his time annihilating the pagan tribes that were jointly inhabiting the land alongside the Israelites<sup>□3</sup>. On each raid he took the trouble to leave no survivors<sup>□4</sup>. He would tell Achish that he had been invading Israelite villages<sup>□5</sup> and made sure no-one was alive that would reveal his deceit<sup>□6</sup>. David's subterfuge led Achish to believe he had completely gone over to the Philistines<sup>□7</sup>.

□1 27:5

□2 27:6

□3 27:7-8

□4 27:9a

□5 27:9b-10

□6 27:11

□7 27:12

5. David's devious scheme led him into attacking Israel

5. **David's devious scheme led him into attacking Israel.** It was only a matter of time before he would be dragged into something disgracefully identified with the Philistines cause. Soon Achish expected David to take part in an attack upon Israel<sup>□1</sup>. Now what would David do?

□1 28:1-2

• David's life was needlessly violent at this point

All of this was disgraceful. True, the Israelites had been told to slaughter the Canaanites and Saul had lost his kingdom for not doing so<sup>□1</sup>. But God's last instruction had been to stay in Judah. Later when David wanted to build the temple, he would be forbidden *'because you have shed much blood upon the earth in my sight'*<sup>□2</sup>. David's life was needlessly violent at this point. It would lead him into yet further troubles.

□1 15:2-23

□2 1 Chronicles 22:8

**Great crises**

Great crises test our faith

**Great crises test our faith.** God sometimes lets us fall into acute difficulty so that we are able to see what is the level of our faith. David had been a hero of faith in many great and wonderful ways since his earliest days. Even as a boy he had shown great faith as a shepherd defending his flock against wild animals. The defeat of Goliath had shown great faith in God and had been the beginning of his career as a national leader in Israel. Yet David's faith could still

fail him when he was under pressure and God allows him to see it at this time in his life, just before he becomes king. Our faith is faith in God. It is not faith in our own faith!

• *Great crises test our willingness to seek Go*

**Great crises test our willingness to seek God.** What David failed to do in all of this was to seek God. God had a will and a purpose for David. David could have approached the Lord, seeking his will in this desperate situation he felt himself to be in. But this is where David failed. Later when David's own devices were obviously letting him down badly and he was '*greatly distressed*'<sup>1</sup>, he turned to God<sup>1</sup> and asked the help of Abiathar the priest who had the ephod, the jacket which contained the stones that could be used for finding God's will<sup>1</sup>. But at this earlier stage in these events David is not living on God.

<sup>1</sup> 30:6

• *The danger of self sufficiency*

Hebrews tells us to take care lest in our hearts there springs up an evil heart of unbelief leading us to turn away from the living God. The more resourceful and self-sufficient we are, the more likely we are to turn to our own resources.

• *Discreditable entanglements*

It is likely to lead us into entanglements that will be entirely discreditable. David acts as though God is not able to deliver him, despite many deliverances he has been through before, some of them astonishing and dramatic. Had he forgotten the way God aided him against Goliath? Has he forgotten the time he was almost trapped by Saul and God came to his aid in a marvellous way?

• *A good lesson to learn before becoming king*



It was a good lesson for David to learn at this very late stage in the days before he would be king. If God had not allowed him to stumble in this way he would have gone into the kingship with a self-sufficient attitude. Better to make mistakes like this before he is the king.

David thought Saul was hunting him. Actually there is no problem at all! Saul has given up altogether from his pursuit of David and at the very time ('*In those days,*'<sup>1</sup>) was moving in a direction that would lead to his final removal<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 28:1  
<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 28

• *Proverbs 3:6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart...*

Our turning to our own devices is always a mistake. The words of Proverbs 3:6 were perhaps written by David's son. '*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*'

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