

When Prudent Men Make Stupid Choices

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. 1Samuel 27:1 - 30:9

1. Bible students who admire heroes of faith often forget that they had feet of clay, that they made mistakes and occasionally fell short of pleasing God.
2. We even go so far as to believe that God excused foolish, even sinful, behavior because they are heroes of faith
3. Job questioned God, Abraham lied twice, Jacob was deceptive, David numbered Israel, and Judah hired harlots.
4. While the texts do not specifically state that God disapproves, and the matter turned out for the good, we must never conclude that bad judgment and sinful behavior was overlooked by God because these were special people.
5. Sin is sin, and God is not a respecter of persons, and that includes heroes of faith.

B. Imagine being David

1. Told as a teenager that he would be the next king of Israel
2. Then in the royal palace performing for the king
3. Brought into national prominence
4. Killed the champion of Philistia, Goliath, with a single stone
5. Married the king's daughter and best friends with the king's son
6. Everything leading up to the point where he would become king in a decisive way

C. And then it starts coming apart

1. He is no longer in favor with the king, his wife leaves him, he can no longer see his best friend Jonathan, he is demoted and discharged from the army, and he is running for his life from Saul, determined to kill him.
2. He continues to show compassion to others he could have robbed, harmed, or killed; but, he is treated poorly in return

D. Then one day he has had enough

1. It appears that God has forgotten him; it appears that his enemies were going to win; he becomes disillusioned and without hope
2. Something broke in David; he went from the pinnacle of influence to the pit of the fugitive.
3. While he was in that condition, he made a foolish decision that produced serious consequences for his life. He made a tragic decision and paid a high price.

I. REASONS FOR DAVID'S DECISION

- A. David trusted the wrong confidant - he had a conversation with himself, instead of turning to God in prayer as he had so often done - 1Sam. 27:1
- B. David believed the wrong counsel - When David communed with his heart, he forgot what God said to him.

1. God promised David that he would be king - 1Sam. 16:1, 13
 - a. Jonathan confirmed it - 1Sam. 23:17
 - b. Confirmed by Abigail - 1Sam. 25:30-31
 - c. Even verified by Saul - 1Sam. 24:20
2. But David forgot all of this when he believed he was in charge of his own future - Psalm 135:6; Eph. 1:11
- C. David reached the wrong conclusions - He decided that he would be better off fleeing to the Philistines, where he thought he would be safe from King Saul.
 1. The future king of Israel ran to the arch enemies of God to beg for help
- D. Beware of trusting your own heart. When we consult the heart, we access with our human nature.
 1. Our human nature looks at things from the flesh - Gal. 5:19-21.
 2. When people say, "Well, I feel it in my heart," they are usually headed for trouble - Jer. 17:9; Prov. 28:26
 3. When someone says to you, "Just listen to what your heart is telling you," they have given you advice that can lead to spiritual ruin
 4. Your heart will say things like, "This life isn't worth it"; "These people don't like me"; "God is being unfair to me"; "I would be better off if I stayed home, or went somewhere else"; "That preacher is mean"; "I am really missing it. There's nothing wrong with living it up every now and then"; "God doesn't even care about me. If He did, these things would not be happening to me"; "Just once won't hurt"; etc.

II. RESULTS OF DAVID'S DECISION

- A. The people in his life were affected - 1Sam. 27:2-3
 1. All 600 of his men and their families; his own wives and children; everyone around David was brought down by his decision
 2. Rom. 14:7 - Everything we do touches those around us. When a husband or a wife steps out of God's will, it affects their marriage, children, extended family.
 3. There is a price to pay for impacting others negatively - Luke 17:1-2
- B. The pattern of his life was affected - 1Sam. 27:5-12
 1. His decision to walk away from the Lord changed him completely.
 - a. v. 4 - He lived with a sense of false security.
 - b. v. 5 - He sought help from and ran with the wrong crowd.
 - c. v. 8-12 - He did things there that he never would have done before: murdered, lied, and aided the enemy of God.
 - d. v. 7 - He stayed in sin for 16 months.
 - e. Notice that no Psalms are attributed to David during this period of his life. The "Sweet Singer of Israel" lost his voice.
 2. Backsliders believe they will remain the same and return unchanged
 - a. They live with a false sense of security - Rev. 3:19; Heb. 12:6-12
 - b. They find they are soon doing things they would not have done before with a crowd they would not have run with - 1Cor. 15:33
 - c. They will find that their lifestyle has changed and find that years have passed while they languished in the far country.

- d. They find that their desire for spiritual things has dried up.
- C. The peace of his life was affected - 1Sam. 29:1 - 30:6
 - 1. "Sin will take you farther than you want to go; keep you longer than you want to stay; and cost you more than you want to pay." (Ted Haggard, tent preacher)
 - 2. David has fallen as far as a man can fall.
 - a. 1Sam. 29:1-5 - David lost his identity; he united with the Philistines, and they didn't even want him; they knew he wasn't truly one of them; at this point David didn't belong in either world
 - b. 1Sam. 29:6-8 - David showed how far he had fallen. The future king of Israel grovels at a pagan king's feet
 - c. 1Sam. 29:9-11 - David declared to be a faithful servant of Achish
 - d. 1Sam. 30:1-5 - David reaps what he has sown. The Amalekites retaliate against David and his men for their earlier actions. Their families are taken captive and their city is burned to the ground. But, the pagans showed more mercy than David.
 - e. 1Sam. 30:6 - David reached the bottom. His men turn on him and threaten to kill him. They realize all of this is the result of David's foolish decision.
- D. There will be a price to pay, and God will have no trouble collecting it from our lives - Num. 32:23; Psalm 13:1-2

III. RECOVERY FROM DAVID'S DECISION

- A. 1Sam. 30:6 - David repented before the Lord
 - 1. He turned his gaze back toward heaven when he saw the havoc he had wrought on earth
- B. 1Sam. 30:7 - David relied on the Lord
 - 1. He called on the Lord in prayer to seek God's will and His help.
- C. 1Sam. 30:8-9 - David returned to the Lord
 - 1. He goes out immediately to do what the Lord told him to do.
- D. The first step in making things right is repentance - Prov. 28:13; 1John 1:9
 - 1. The Lord's response to the repentance of David? "I am sorry David, but you have crossed the line. I have found someone new to be the king"? Or, "I am going to give you three month probation. If you do all right, then we'll talk about restoration"? Or, "Well, I'll forgive you, but things can never be the same between us again"?
 - 2. There is a temporal price to pay for the sins we commit (Gal. 6:7). But, when God forgives, He forgives immediately, completely and eternally.

Conclusion:

A. Regardless of how smart we may be, regardless of how long we may have been a Christian, or regardless of how high we may climb on the spiritual ladder, we are still capable of making foolish decisions. You will not escape the mess you will make or the harm you have done until you listen to God and repent.