

COURAGE TO LEAN ON GOD

1 Samuel 21:10-15

February 19th 2012

This passage is strange. Here we see young David; the giant killer; the man who would be king of Israel; acting like a mad man. Here is a man who has thrown all of his self-respect to the wind. Here is a man who appears to have hit rock bottom in his life. What brought David to this point in his life?

The answer is this: Every one of us leans on someone or something to help us get through this life. We all have a well developed support system in place. We depend on the people and the things in our lives to help us make it through day by day. In fact, we are guilty of leaning on our support system more heavily and more often that we lean upon the Lord.

But, God did not save us so we could rest ourselves in other people and in other things. God saved us to walk in absolute and utter dependence upon Him. And, when He sees His children leaning on everyone and everything but Him; we can count on His teaching us the lessons we need so that we might learn to lean on Him alone.

I see this principle at work in David's life. I want to spend some time in several chapters of the Bible today. I want to show you how David was taught to learn solely upon the Lord. I want us to learn the truth that what God in David's life He is prepared to do in your life and mine. You see, leaning isn't bad; as long as we are leaning on the right One. I want to take our time today and preach on the thought: ***The Courage to lean on God!***

I. DAVID'S SUPPORT SYSTEM IS DEVELOPED

Up to this point, David has done everything right in his life. He has been the absolute model of faith, courage, obedience, integrity and devotion to God and to his king. But, he is still a very young man who is living a long way from his home and family. David needed some stability in his life. So, God, in His grace, placed some things and some people in David's life to be a support system for him. Let me share a few of those things with you.

A. **He Leaned On The Support Of Position** – **1 Sam. 18:13** – **1 Samuel 18:13** **Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.** A humble shepherd boy had been promoted to a captain over a thousand in Saul's army. He was also the chief musician in Saul's court. His work gave him stability in his life. He needed that; he leaned on that. Of course, David probably saw his advancements in the army and in Saul's court as merely stepping stones to the throne of Israel.

B. **He Leaned On The Support Of Popularity** – **1 Sam. 18:16** – **1 Samuel 18:16** **But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.** The people of Israel loved David and respected him for what he had done and how he conducted himself before them. David leaned on the support of the people. No doubt, the praise of the people was just another assurance that one day he would be their king.

C. **He Leaned On The Support Of People** – God placed some special people in the life of David during those difficult days.

1. **The Partner Michal – 1 Sam. 18:20, 28** – 1 Samuel 18:20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 1 Samuel 18:28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him. David was given a wife who genuinely loved him. No doubt David drew great strength from leaning on the support of Michal's love for him.
2. **The Prince Jonathan – 1 Sam. 18:1-4** – 1 Samuel 18:1-4 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. Jonathan proved to be a faithful friend to young David. He was David's eyes and ears in the throne room. Jonathan even placed his friendship to David higher than his allegiance to his own father. David often leaned on the support of his friendship with Jonathan.
3. **The Prophet Samuel – 1 Sam. 16:13**; – 1 Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. The old prophet was also a support in the life of David. Samuel taught David about sacrifice, service and worship. He was a significant support to David during those early years. *Ex.: Church members who put their faith, trust and allegiance in their Pastor, instead of God (Jack Hyles).*

D. He Leaned On The Support Of Pride – 1 Sam. 18:15 – 1 Samuel 18:14-15 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. David took pride in the life he lived and he knew how to carry himself before me. He probably placed a great deal of emphasis on during the right thing. He had self-respect, self-control and self-esteem. His pride was a crucial part of his support system. Nothing wrong with the right kind of pride!

(Note: We ought to stop and thank the Lord for the support system He has placed within each of our lives. Just stop to think of where you would be and what you would do without the people and the props God has placed in your life.

- Where would you be without the love of your spouse?
- Where would you be without the support of your spouse?
- Where would you be without the encouragement of your friends?
- Where would you be without the fellowship and encouragement of your church?
- Where would you be without the guidance and direction given to you from the Word of God?
- Where would you be without the benefit of all these safety nets God has placed in your life?
- Thank God for the supports, props, crutches, or whatever you want to call them that God has placed in our lives to help us make it! God has been gracious to you when He has supplied you with an adequate support network in your life!)

II. **DAVID'S SUPPORT SYSTEM IS DISMANTLED**

A. **The Process Of The Dismantling** – David's support system was in place, but it was not going to last for very long. God allowed a series of events to take place in David's life that destroyed and removed every single prop he had in his support system. One day David was on top of the world. The next day, he was on the bottom. David became a man *hunted by his enemies; haunted by*

death and hounded by destruction. David's own estimation of his troubles is found in **1 Sam. 20:3b**. 1 Samuel 20:3 And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

You see, God began the process of systematically dismantling every piece of David's support system. Think of it:

1. **David Lost His Position – 1 Sam. 19:8-10 – 1 Samuel 19:8-10** And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. The Captain of Israel's army, the greatest battlefield hero in the nation's history, has become a fugitive from justice. Another prop is taken away.
2. **David Lost His Popularity –** As one removed from the public eye, David was soon relegated to memory. People probably assumed that Saul would be successful in his attempts to take David's life. Still another prop removed.
3. **David Lost His People –** Every person upon whom David leaned in his life was taken away.
 - a. **Michal Was Removed – 1 Sam. 19:11-17 – 1 Samuel 19:11-17** Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster. And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee? First Michal tells David of Saul's plot and helps him escape; then she lies to her father and says that David had threatened to kill her unless she did. She deliberately walks away from David and their relationship will never be harmonious again. Another support is taken away!
 - b. **Jonathan Was Removed – 1 Sam. 20:41-42 – 1 Samuel 20:41-42** And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city. Jonathan goes as far as he can to protect David, and in the end, Jonathan must send David away for his own safety. There is a tearful parting of these two close friends and they meet no more as friends in life. Still another support is removed from David's life.

- c. **Samuel Was Removed – 1 Sam. 20:1** – In **1 Sam. 19:18, 1 Samuel 20:1** *And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?* In 1 Sam 19:18, David went to his old friend and mentor, the prophet Samuel. But, eventually David had to flee from the presence of Samuel, because of the relentless pursuit of King Saul. He lost another of his supports.
4. **David Lost His Pride – 1 Sam. 21:10-15** - Here, David reaches the bottom. Here, the last support in his system is torn away and David reaches the lowest point in his life. He goes into the palace of King Achish, the king of the Philistines, to see if this king will give him sanctuary. Imagine, the champion of the armies of Israel runs to the palace of the enemy to try and find a friend!

But, the Philistines have not forgotten that it was David who destroyed their champion. David is filled with fear that the Philistines will retaliate, so he pretends to be a raving lunatic, so that he might escape from these people too. Here he is, the mighty man who killed the great giant Goliath; and he is scratching on the gates and drooling on his beard like a mad man! Oh, how the mighty are fallen! The last crutch; the last prop in David's support system has been systematically dismantled by the Lord and David has reached to bottom. He has nothing left!

Every dream, every lofty goal, every hope had been dashed to bits at David's feet. He has nothing and no one on whom he can lean. He is alone, afraid and alienated. God has brought David from the very top to the very bottom of life³. Why?

- B. **The Purpose Of The Dismantling** – Why did God do this to David? Why did God so afflict a *“man after His Own heart?”* God did this to David so that David would learn to lean on the Lord and not on all the other props he had constructed in his life! To teach David the great truth that God's people should lean only upon the Lord, God systematically removed one support after another from under David until he had been taught to lean wholly upon the Lord!

(Note: How we need to hear this truth! All the way through life we lean on one thing and one person after another. We trust look to our parents when we are young. Later we lean on teachers, schooling and friends. Then, our prop becomes a job or a pile of money somewhere. We lean on this crutch and on that prop and we forget a couple of very important truths.

1. **Our Support System Can Develop To The Place Where It Can Take The Place Of God In Our Lives – Deuteronomy 33:27** *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Isaiah 41:10* *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* Look at what you are depending on this evening. Do you ever find yourself trusting people, things and self more than you trust the Lord?
2. **Our Support System Can Prevent Us From Looking Up For The Help We Need** – Our focus should be vertical and not horizontal! Nothing cripples our walk of faith any more than all the earthly, human crutches upon which we lean. These crutches cause us to look at what we can do for ourselves, or what others can do for us. In the end, all these props will fail; our gaze should be cast heavenward! When we lean on the unfailing prop of God Himself, we can be sure that He will always come through.

3. **Our Support System Is Temporary At Best** - Every plank in my support system can and will fail; but if we learn to lean solely on the Lord, He will never fail: **Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* **Matthew 28:20** *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

(**Note:** It's not easy to take, but the truth is, when the Lord finds us leaning on everything else in our lives instead of Him; He will begin the painful process of dismantling our support system one prop at a time. He does not do this to harm us; but to help us learn to lean on Him alone!)

III. Psalm 34 **DAVID'S SUPPORT SYSTEM IS DECLARED**

Did David learn to lean solely on the Lord? I think he did! As the metal of David's life was tempered in the furnace of affliction and shaped upon the anvil of providence, David learned to lean completely on the Lord. He writes about this process in **Psalm 34**. If you will notice the title of this Psalm; it shows us when it was written. It came about after all the props had been removed from David's life. It also shows us that David's focus had been turned toward God in Heaven. Notice how David learned to lean on the right One.

- A. v. 1-3 **He Learned To Lean On The Lord's Praise** – The focus of David's praise has been shifted higher than position, popularity, people and pride. David has learned to lean on the praises of God. **Psa. 86:10**, *“For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.”*
- B. v. 4-7 **He Learned To Lean On The Lord's Protection** – Instead of running to Jonathan, Michal or Samuel to try and find protection; David has learned the lesson that God is the One Who protects His people. **Isa. 54:17**, *“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”*
- C. v. 8-10 **He Learned To Lean On The Lord's Provision** – He doesn't need the kindness of others, or the bread from the Tabernacle; he has learned to lean on the open hand of His heavenly Father for the provisions of life. **Psalm 37:25**, *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”*
- D. v. 11-17 **He Learned To Lean On The Lord's Promises** – David has learned that the promises of men do not amount to much. He has also learned that those who learn to lean on the hand of the Lord will see every promise of God fulfilled in their lives. **Psalm 119:89**, *“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”*
- E. v. 18 **He Learned To Lean On The Lord's Presence** – The other props in David's life failed just when he needed them the most. He has learned that those who lean on the Lord are never without a faithful Friend. **Pro. 18:24**, *“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”*
- F. v. 19-22 **He Learned To Lean On The Lord's Preservation** – In the end, not a single crutch that David leaned on so heavily was able to secure him or protect him. He learned the priceless, eternal truth that God, and God alone, preserves His people. **Psalm 61:2**, *“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”*

This leaning business hits pretty close to home for me. There are plenty of times I find myself leaning on this thing or on that person instead of the Lord. How about you? But, I have also found that when I learn to lean on other things in my life; God will systematically and painfully remove every crutch I have. He will bring me to the place where I am leaning on Him and on Him alone. That is where He plans to bring each of us!

Now, when God begins to dismantle our support system, it can get quite painful. But, we should not fear what the Lord is doing in our lives. He is merely growing us and teaching us that He is all we need. He is all-sufficient; more than enough; He is God Almighty, and He will never fail you, leave you or let you down. He wants us to learn this truth: When we have Him. We have all the support system that we will ever need! Ill. **Psalm 46!**

There is a verse and a chorus from a song by a man named John Stallings that I would like to share with you. It speaks to the heart of what I have been trying to say this evening.

Sad, broken-hearted,

At an altar I've knelt,

I've found a peace so serene.

All that He asked is a Child-like trust,

And a heart that is learning to lean.

Learning to Lean

Learning to Lean

I'm learning to lean on Jesus

Finding more power than I've ever dreamed

I'm learning to lean on Jesus

Friend, what makes up your support system today? On what or on whom are you leaning for your support?

- If you know that you are not leaning on the Lord as heavily as you should be, I would invite you to tear down your own support system this evening and lean fully on the Lord Jesus.
- If God is in the process of tearing down your support system already, come to him and express your faith in Him afresh this evening. Ask Him to help you learn to lean.
- If you have never been saved, this would be a good time for you to throw down all your crutches and come to the Lord and lean on Him for your salvation and all the needs of your life.