

TANGLED: Seven Sins that Holds Us Back

Deadly ENVY: 1 Samuel 10-20

INTRO: Intro to Anger and Envy: We will examine together today and next Sunday a two-part prequel to the story of David and Bathsheba. It is the story of David and Saul, the first king of Israel. Here we will explore the forces of envy and anger that overcame Saul and led to his undoing.

I do not think we are born with envy in our hearts. We are self-centered, surely, but we learn to envy others as we grow older and begin to compare ourselves one to another.

Saul was tall. He stood head and shoulders taller than anyone else in the kingdom. He was handsome. He seemed to be an obedient son to his father, Kish, and he seemed to have a sensitive spirit. He seemed to be God-fearing, and he seemed at first to be humble and submissive to God.

I. Convincing Ourselves that We Are Chosen: *“Why do you say such a thing to me?”* (I Sam. 9:21).

A. Samuel the prophet said to the young Saul, “To whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and your whole family line?” (1 Sam. 9:20). Samuel was looking for a king because the Israelites demanded one so they could be like all the other nations. Samuel knew immediately when he saw Saul that this was the one God had chosen. When Samuel told Saul that he was favored by God, Saul began by saying that he was from the smallest tribe of Israel, Benjamin, and he was from the least of all the clans of Benjamin. Saul was genuinely surprised, humbled, amazed, and even confused.

B. Samuel notified Saul of his gifts and his favor before God.

C. Saul had to be convinced himself that he was God’s choice. Samuel gave him a list of signs that would follow in his journey, all of which came true. These were necessary to convince the humble young man that God could actually use him and that he had heard from God.

D. “The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person” (I Sam. 10:6). “Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you” (I Sam. 10:7).

E. Saul was hiding among the supplies when Samuel began the public meeting where he intended to introduce Saul to the nation (1 Sam. 10:22). His friends dragged him into the center of the circle and Samuel said, *“Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.”* Then the people shouted, *“Long live the king!”* (I Sam. 10:24-25).

II. Changing to Fit Our New Identity: *“As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day”* (I Sam. 10:9).

A. Saul prophesied with the prophets so that his friends said, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (I Sam. 10:12). It seemed so unlikely that the shy and humble man would be a prophet.

B. The ANOINTING makes you a KING. This is true for David and for Saul. Saul does not believe in himself until he is anointed. David does not attack Goliath, the single event that launches his career, until Samuel has anointed him king of Israel. Each of these men were young and inexperienced when they were anointed by Samuel. But Samuel was the King-Maker. He knew both how to select the man to lead the nation, and how to convince the chosen one that he could actually do it.

C. God anoints us, and we anoint one another. WE BLESS EACH OTHER. The blessing is very similar to the anointing. The blessing is done through the laying on of hands. The hands of another are placed upon us. Those hands convey a DESIGNATION and SEPARATION. The designation and separation they communicate depend upon the person and the circumstance.

D. There is no room for ENVY when you know yourself as the CHOSEN of God, and you have changed your self-identity to conform to this new reality.

E. Envy can only happen when you are dissatisfied with your identity in Christ and are longing for another identity that you prefer.

F. Sadly, those who refused to acknowledge the new identity given to Saul cut themselves out of the blessings of his rise to the throne. Their envy entangled them and held them back.

III. Hearing Our Supporters and Our Skeptics:

A. Supporters are people who believe in you despite your faults. *Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched* (1 Sam. 10:26).

1. Your mother believes in you not because you are flawless but IN ORDER THAT you may believe in yourself.
2. God announces that he has chosen you SO THAT YOU WILL BELIEVE IT YOURSELF.
3. Your friends are the people who believe in you despite your limitations. Your enemies are the people who refuse to believe in you despite your strengths.
4. Your friends build you up. Your enemies tear you down.

***In Swahili, Simba means “lion.” Nala means “gift.” And Rafiki means “friend.” Simba only begins to understand his responsibilities and potential when he has a true friend.

B. Skeptics are people who don’t believe in you regardless of your strengths: *But some scoundrels said, “How can this fellow save us?” They despised him and brought him no gifts* (1 Sam. 10:27).

1. Saul is experiencing the envy and jealousy of others. Some people immediately react with scorn and disdain the minute another person is promoted. This is ENVY.

2. They are scoundrels because they did not believe in the new identity that God gave to Saul.

C. We embrace our friends.

D. We are SILENT toward the Skeptics.

1. This is the first instance in the story where Saul experiences criticism and envy from others. He will be the object of envy for the duration of his reign as king.

2. Here he handled it as we always must, “But Saul kept silent” (1 Sam. 10:27). Silence is golden when you are the object of envy and jealousy. These sins are not reasonable but emotional. Those who hold envy in their hearts are not to be won by words but by actions.

3. This is how this chapter 10 ends and how this chapter of becoming king of Israel ends for Saul. He knows that he is CHOSEN, and he knows that he is ENVIED.

IV. Refusing to Compare Ourselves to Others: “*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands*” (1 Sam. 18:7).

A. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE BEING COMPARED WITH OTHERS. The women did the comparing of Saul and David as they sang. The song itself was authored by someone who did the comparison. Whether you are an athlete, a musician, a businessman, or a preacher, you will experience being compared with others.

***For awhile my worship leader was a beautiful woman named Kay. She was six feet tall, long black hair, and sang like an angel. I told people that I benefited from the company but suffered from the contrast between her and me.

B. COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS WILL RUIN YOUR DAY.

1. This refrain that the women of Israel sang rattled and angered King Saul. He could not get it out of his mind and heart.

2. Saul was the anointed King. Yet he became impulsive, impetuous, paranoid, and imbalanced as he let envy and jealousy of David ruin his heart.

***Comparing one person to another is like comparing one sunset to another. Each one is different, and each one is spectacular in its own way. Some are more subtle, some more dramatic. “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” (Novel *Molly Bawn*, 1878).

C. Many members, each with his own gift. No two people are exactly alike. Each is unique. And each brings a unique contribution to the Body of Christ and to the community of which they are a part.