

David In Ziklag

Has there been times in your life when you experienced distress and needed direction from God? David had many successes in life, but he also had many struggles. Before he became king, he spent almost 10 years on the run from King Saul who sought to take his life. For a time, while being pursued, David stayed in Ziklag, as leader of a small community. In 1 Samuel 30:1-8, we read while David and his men were away, the Amalekites came into David's camp at Ziklag, raided it, destroyed it with fire and took all the women and children captive. David's wives were amongst them.



Many of us have experienced David's emotions at some point in our life. Disaster comes, things don't turn out as we expected. Whatever our Ziklag may be, it is easy to get caught up in reasoning over circumstances. Hurt, disappointment, doubt, unbelief and anger are understandable and normal emotions to experience during times

of loss and disaster, but if they take root, and we don't accept God's counsel, direction or healing and move on from 'Ziklag' it will destroy us spiritually.

" Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old.

On returning to Ziklag, David and his men were in great distress. The men became angry and even considered stoning David.

David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. (1 Samuel 30:1-6)

David wept until he had no strength (1 Samuel 30:4). He must have been confused, disappointed, possibly even angry. Why had God allowed this disaster to come upon them? As well as losing his own loved ones, his men had now turned against him and wanted to stone him.

It can be difficult to hear God during emotional turmoil. David needed to hear from God. He knew from his past experiences, God was bigger than the situation in Ziklag. He didn't understand how God allowed this to happen, but he still sought the Lord. David found his strength in the Lord (verse 6).

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength. (Isaiah 40:31)

David remembered how God was faithful, he refused to doubt God. He enquired of the Lord before taking any action. *"shall I pursue this raiding party?"* (verse 8). Despite the pressure from his angry men, he still took the time to seek God for direction. God gave David the assurance that if he pursued the Amalekites, he would recover everything. David and his men pursued them. On the way God provided guidance through an Egyptian slave who had been left behind by the raiding party. The slave led them to the exact position where God gave them the victory over their enemies. David and his men brought back all their loved ones and their possessions.

All things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28)

Christians in Ziklag

We might not always understand God's ways, but we can choose to trust Him. When hardships come, we can either withdraw from God or draw closer. Temporary discouragement will come during our Christian life, but becomes dangerous if we dwell there, or allow anger or hurt to turn to bitterness. David's men were distressed, understandably, they had just lost their loved ones. The Bible says the men became *'bitter in spirit'*. This was what led to them wanting to stone David, they must have blamed him for what happened. When tragedies occur, many of us can look for someone to blame. Their actions reflected their hearts. Disappointment and hurt can develop into bitterness, We can carry on through the Christian life spiritually wounded and hurt, with an embittered spirit, or we can dwell on the 'why God'?

Disappointment leads to the loss of hope and vision. We stop praying, reading the Bible, going to church if we get stuck on the 'Why God?' We become focused on what God has not done or allowed to happen. It is possible to become withdrawn inwardly not necessarily outwardly. We become numb, living outwardly in the faith, without enthusiasm and the relationship with God we used to have. We can go through motions of being a Christian without hope, barely surviving in the faith instead of living in it. We need to guard our hearts, as we can also become easy prey for the enemy. Drawing closer to God in times of trials is not easy. David was distressed, but he also realised there was no-one else to turn to. We need to reflect on God's faithfulness. We need to hear from God for His counsel, healing and direction.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". (Jeremiah 29:11-12)

Ziklag is a story of recovery, taking back what the enemy has stolen. Forgive God if need be, don't blame yourself or others. Don't focus on things God has not done yet, you will become even more discouraged, focus on the things God has already done. Remember His promises, especially any personal ones.