

## 5—Achish of Gath’s View of David: A Crazy Madman

### 1 Samuel 21; Psalm 34

Have you ever had a really bad day? Have you ever had a moment you regret and just wish you could forget? Have you ever gone through a phase of life where everything just seemed harder and different than ever before and you were just not sure how to handle it?



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**“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”**

Psalm 34:1 (NKJV)

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that is plaguing our marriage.

As parents, we can have bad days too. Some days we just do not handle the pressures of life well. There are days we wish we could have back. There are days we hope our kids will forget.

Well, in the Bible, there were some characters who had bad days too. Adam and Eve started it off for us when they decided to sin in the garden, blamed each other, and then were cursed. Noah had a bad day after the ark landed and he decided to get drunk and embarrass himself in front of his children. Esau made a really poor decision when he decided to sell off his birthright just because he was hungry and wanted a pot of stew. In the New Testament, Peter had a rough night after he denied Jesus three times right after he promised he would never do such a thing!

Likewise, as we study the life of David, we come across an interesting episode in 1 Samuel 21 which seems so out of character for him. Just prior to this chapter we have seen David playing the harp for King Saul, standing over top of a defeated Goliath, being given the king’s daughter as a reward. Yet, as we come turn the page to 1 Samuel 21 David’s so scared he literally acts crazy, foams at the mouth, and asks a priest to break the law for him. Let’s think a bit more about how our impulsive, wild choices can really harm our reputations when we handle our problems foolishly. Yet, along with David, let’s learn from his mistakes about how to do better next time.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Read Psalm 34. How would you describe David’s mindset as he writes this psalm based on verses 4, 6, 18, and 19? According to the heading of Psalm 34, when does David write this psalm (please note “Abimelech” was a title often used for Philistine kings, just like “Pharaoh” was a title used for Egyptian kings)?

2. Now read 1 Samuel 21. What new situation does David find himself in as we come to this chapter and in what way does he handle this new lifestyle poorly (see 21:2, 5-6, 10, 12-13; 22:1-2)?

3. Does Achish, the king of Gath (see 1 Samuel 17:4—hometown of Goliath), seem to think David is acting very courageous and kingly (1 Samuel 21:13-14)?

- First new reality: David is promoted from shepherd to king (16:12-13).
- Second reality: David plays music for crazy Saul (16:19-23).
- Third reality: David's new army is filled with cowards (17:23-26).
- Fourth reality: David's family despises him and insults his bravery (17:27-30).
- Fifth reality: David slays Goliath and becomes an overnight celebrity (17:51).
- Sixth reality: David is immensely popular in Israel (18:6-8).
- Seventh reality: David is envied and hated by King Saul (18:9-13).
- Eighth reality: David is engaged and the engagement is broken (18:17-19).
- Ninth reality: David is engaged, again, and Saul makes crazy demands (18:23-27).
- Tenth reality: David flees his father-in-law and leaves his wife behind (19:11-13).
- Eleventh reality: David leaves his best friend (20:33-37,41).

4. Now, let's seek to understand, with a touch of mercy, all David has been through up to this point? How can knowing one's past circumstances help us relate to them in the present?

5. Now, go back to Psalm 34. By noticing the following verses, what do you think David learned from this out-of-character experience (34:1, 11, 12-14)? This verse passage is also quoted in the New Testament by Peter as he writes to Christians who are suffering through various trials (government, slavery, work, marriage). What do you think Peter learned from his out-of-character experience that he wanted others facing trials to learn too (1 Pet 3:10-13)?

### Key Lessons:

- Even people usually at their best, can have terrible moments—seek to understand.
- We can sometimes make reputation-damaging mistakes when we take matters into our own hands—trust God at all times (Psalm 34:1, 11-14)
- God delivered David from the hand of his enemies and made him king; just as God delivered Jesus from death and made him King of Kings!

Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_