

## 12—Shimei’s View of David: A Bloodthirsty Rogue

### 2 Samuel 16

Have you ever said something to or about someone and then, later, regretted it? Chances are, we have all said or done something hurtful. James 3:8 says, “...*no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*” James uses many illustrations concerning the tongue. He compares its damage to a forest fire, describes its fruit as bitter, and likens our tongues to the deadly poison which comes from a serpent.

Have you ever heard the story about the boy who had a temper and tongue problem? Every time he would get angry and say something hurtful, his father would make him hammer a nail in a fencepost. The first day he



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“Shimei said thus when he cursed:  
‘Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty  
man, you rogue!’”

2 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)

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hammered 37 nails into the fencepost! Over time though, he decided it was easier to control his temper than to hammer nails into the post. So, after he made it a full day without hammering a nail into the post, his father allowed him to remove a nail one day at a time. As the boy mastered his tongue and kept removing nails the day finally came when there were no more nails in the post. He proudly told his father, “Dad, look, I just took the last nail out of the post.” His father said, “That is true, but did you notice there are still holes? Every time we say a hurtful word, we leave a hole in someone else that cannot be repaired.” Quickly, the boy apologized to his father and was forgiven.

Can you think of a time someone said something hurtful to you? Can you still remember the words they said? Can you remember the tears you cried? Do you remember how painful it was? They may even have apologized to you but we sometimes still carry emotional scars.

Well, imagine someone who is a celebrity or someone who is in power. People tend to be quick to give their opinions about people who are in the spotlight (elected leaders, athletes, preachers). People sometimes talk about people over the water cooler at work. They may post hurtful words on a social media post. Sometimes they yell hateful things from the stands or from the crowd. Whether it is true or not, those words often hurt.

This brings us to our text today as we think about one such person in the life of David—Shimei. Notice this memorable picture of Shimei painted by the Scriptures: “*as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust*” (2 Samuel 16:13). Can you imagine somebody standing on an opposite hill throwing rocks from a distance and cursing at you? Let’s think a bit more about Shimei’s view of David...and see if he ever regretted those words and actions...

### Discussion Questions:

1. Read 2 Samuel 16:5-8. Who is Shimei? Why might this affect his view of David? What does Shimei say to David?

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2. What does Abishai want to do to Shimei because of his hurtful words (2 Samuel 16:9)? What does Proverbs 18:6-7 say our “lips” can cause?

3. How does David react to Shimei’s cursing and to Abishai’s desire to violently respond (2 Samuel 16:10-12)? Why does David respond in this way? Why do you think his approach reflects wisdom (see also Romans 12:17-21)?

4. Shimei may have thought Absalom was going to defeat David. However, after Absalom dies and David returns home his tune changes a bit. Shimei is the first to line up and greet David upon his return. How is this encounter different than the first one (2 Samuel 19:15-20)?

5. What, again, does Abishai want to do to Shimei (19:21)? What does David do instead (2 Samuel 19:22-23)? What important lessons might this teach us about how we deal with our enemies? What does Jesus say (Matthew 5:43-45)?

**Key Lessons:**

- Think before you speak. Shimei didn’t. David did.
- Realize people say foolish things they regret. Try not to be reactive or defensive before you respond.
- King David chose grace and longsuffering toward Shimei. Thankfully, King Jesus also offered forgiveness even in the midst of hurt—follow your King (cp. Luke 23:34).

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

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