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Living in HisStory:Revealing the True Wonder of Who God is
Slaying Jealousy
1 Samuel 18-19; 31:1-2; 2 Samuel 9:1-7
Psalm 37:1-11; Romans 8:31-39
January 14, 2018, Jeff Germo

We are continuing on with the very sad story of Saul today and his relationships with his son Jonathan, with David, and of course, with God. The story of Saul reads like a very good novel or movie script. It is filled with intrigue, love, hatred, jealousy, conflict, suspicion, deceit, and — some resolution from time to time, but the resolution is very brief. It's like those TV shows that have an ongoing plot, like Kiefer Sutherland in the series 24. Just when you think you can breathe a little you are pulled in to watch the next episode. That is what Saul's narrative is like.

It is easy to see the three threads we have talked about weaving their way through history and through our lives, played out very clearly in Saul's life.

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- 1. God is up to something.**
- 2. Satan is up to something.**
- 3. We, left to our own devices, without the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, most naturally move away from God.**

You can see these three threads weaving their way through Saul's story very clearly. **God continued on with his plan to gather a people for himself** who he could use to bring his blessing to every nation and restore the *shalom* that was lost in the Garden of Eden at the fall of humankind. **Satan was actively trying to thwart that plan.** And **Saul, over and over again, very decisively chose to go his own way** instead of God's.

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A couple weeks ago, Ryan, in his first ever sermon at CRBC, brilliantly gave us a snapshot into David's unlikely battle with the giant Goliath. If you weren't here for that make sure you go to the website and watch it. He really did a great job of capturing the essence of the passage he was dealing with. He got a lot of positive feedback about that sermon, and I got a ton of feedback about it as well, by email and Facebook, and in one on one interactions. I was very proud of him. He put in a lot of hours of research and writing to develop the sermon. We met a few times to discuss his progress. I gave him some minor pointers. And then once it was done to his and my satisfaction, he practiced his delivery well over twenty times. And then he flawlessly delivered it on December 31st.

Upon hearing the glowing reports about his sermon I had to decide within myself what to do with that information. I had several options. I could have found some holes in his logic, or his hermeneutical studies, or his homiletical efforts and do my best to attempt to show people that it really wasn't all that great. "If I had preached it I would have done it differently. It would have been far superior." And then I could make sure I never scheduled him to preach again for fear that he would out do me and gather a following for himself.

Or, because I am his boss, and he has to do what I say, I could have put him against a wall and practiced my knife throwing.

The other option I have is to celebrate his success and cheer him on and continue to develop him so he becomes undoubtedly better than me for the sake of the mission of Jesus.

This is exactly what we are looking at in the relationship between King Saul and David. Saul had become tormented with jealousy because of David's success and he let that jealousy destroy him.

Before we take a look at that narrative let's define 'jealousy'.

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This is how Oxford's Dictionary of British English defines the adjective "jealous".

jealous | 'dʒɛləs |

adjective

1. feeling or showing an envious resentment of someone or their achievements, possessions, or perceived advantages: *she was always **jealous of me**.*
2. feeling or showing a resentful suspicion that one's partner is attracted to or involved with someone else: *a **jealous husband**.*
3. fiercely protective of one's rights or possessions: *the men were proud of their achievements and **jealous of their independence**.*¹

There is a healthy jealousy, and an unhealthy jealousy. A husband or wife *should* be jealous if their spouse is unfaithful. It is unhealthy not to be jealous in that kind of situation. God has that kind of jealousy for us. When we put other affections ahead of him, the Bible says he is jealous for us.

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The kind of jealousy we are going to talk about this morning is not that kind of jealousy. We are looking at the kind of jealousy that tears us apart on the inside when we see someone doing better than us. Or, when we do whatever we can to put someone else down because we feel threatened by them for whatever reason. When we can't enjoy someone else's success, that is a very unhealthy kind of jealousy and it will destroy us, as we will see it did in Saul's relationship to David.

We are going to pick this up where Ryan left off. Remember, the Philistine giant, Goliath, was taunting the Israelites. He was provoking them by telling them to send their best man to fight him. Everyone was afraid. Saul didn't know what to do. And then David, a little shepherd boy, heard about what was going on and he told King Saul that he would go out and face Goliath.

You know the story. After Saul finished laughing himself silly, David took his sling shot and threw a stone that hit the giant square in the head and killed him. He took Goliath's huge sword and lopped off his head. Saul eagerly watched the whole episode from a distance. After the kill, David walked to Saul carrying Goliath's head and Saul curiously asked about David's background.

Watch what happened in Saul's heart as we read this passage. He went, very quickly, from celebrating David's success to despising him vehemently.

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1 Samuel 18:1–9 (NLT)

¹ After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king's son. There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David. ² From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn't let him return home. ³ And Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, because he loved him as he loved himself. ⁴ Jonathan sealed the pact by taking off his robe and giving it to David, together with his tunic, sword, bow, and belt.

We have some very interesting dynamics going on here. David met Saul's oldest son, Jonathan. David was too young to go into battle, so he was likely about 18 or so, and Jonathan was probably about ten years older. There was an immediate heart connection between the two of them and they became the best of friends.

King Saul saw something special in young David so he made him stay with him and likely mentored him. He knew he was a very gifted young man with a huge amount of potential. I wonder if Jonathan's admiration for David was a spark that kindled Saul's jealousy. Perhaps! What we do know, for sure, is that Saul's insecurities began a lot earlier on in his career. Over and over again he chose to let his pride and insecurities rule the day instead of trusting God.

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⁵ Whatever Saul asked David to do, David did it successfully. So Saul made him a commander over the men of war, an appointment that was welcomed by the people and Saul's officers alike. ⁶

¹ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/jealous>

When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals.

You need to picture this in your mind. David is becoming famous. And it was Saul who gave him his start. And now young David is eclipsing Saul in ability and fame. And all these beautiful Israeli women are clamouring around David when he rides back into town after battle and they want his attention. Saul is watching and seething. He made David what he is. Saul's anger gets even more intense when the ladies start singing their songs comparing David with Saul. It gets quite absurd.

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⁷ This was their song: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!"

The contemporary version of this song would be, "Ryan has hundreds of views on his sermon videos and Jeff only has tens." It's really quite funny, but not to Saul. He feels very threatened.

You have to put yourself in Saul's head. He is seeing his young prodigy rise to fame and he is getting forgotten. He is getting sick of hearing about how great this new young upstart is. "David this, David that."

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⁸This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!"⁹ So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

At this point, Saul had a choice to make. Try to put yourself in his head. I don't think it's too much of a stretch for any of us to see that we could easily be in Saul's place. I would imagine there are not too many weeks that we do not come across similar situations where we compare ourselves to someone else, to what they have that we don't have, or what they can do better than we can do, or who likes them better than us, or who got more likes on Facebook than we did. We have no shortage of opportunities to compare ourselves to others.

Every time we come up against a temptation to compare ourselves to someone else we have a choice to make. We can give in, and slide down the very slippery slope of jealousy, and entertain evil thoughts towards the other person, or wallow in self-pity and defeatist thoughts about ourselves, and let those thoughts take us to some very destructive dark places.

Or, conversely, we can choose to rise above our temptation to compare ourselves and instead, celebrate the other person's victory. We can make that choice. We don't have to give in. Unfortunately, Saul chose wrong and continued his spiral down.

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1 Samuel 18:10–16 (NLT)

¹⁰ The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman.²

This is one of the most difficult passages in the Bible to wrap your head around. Doesn't that sound strange that God would send a spirit, a demon perhaps, to torment Saul? Can, or would God do that?

These are the kinds of verses that can distract us from the main point, so I want to deal with it very quickly and then move on.

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There are some Hebrew words in this verse that can be translated in various ways. 'Tormenting,' is the Hebrew word, 'ra.' It can be translated in many different ways depending on context, including, 'evil,' 'wicked,' 'bad,' 'harmful,' 'troubling,' and many other synonyms.

² <http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&article=1278>

The Hebrew word for 'spirit' is 'ruach' and it can also be translated several different ways depending on context: 'breath,' 'wind,' 'air,' or 'spirit,' just to name a few.

The Hebrew word for 'rave' is 'nibá.' It is most often used of someone who is in a prophetic trance, giving a prophetic utterance.

So, the Hebrew literally says, ***"Immediately the next day an evil spirit from God came upon Saul and he prophesied."***

Without taking the time to go into this in depth, let me just tell you what I believe this means. I think it is much like the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. God did not harden Pharaoh's heart against Pharaoh's will. Pharaoh consciously hardened his own heart and God sped things up and helped him along with what he was already fully intent on doing.

Likewise with Saul. Over Saul's lifetime he continually went the way of arrogant disobedience, choosing to indulge his ego instead of choosing the way of humility and trusting God. God, knowing Saul's heart, permitted an evil spirit to torment him.

So, God did not send an evil spirit into Saul to overrule his free will. God permitted the spirit to enter Saul **in accordance with** Saul's will. He was already purposefully and arrogantly moving away from God, which is what we all naturally do unless we purposefully humble ourselves and allow the Spirit of God to control us.

That is why it is so important to take our thoughts captive and not allow ourselves to entertain jealousy, envy, resentment or any other negative inclinations. They will lead to destruction.

That's as much as I'll say about that. I have put a footnote in my manuscript that you can get from our website so you can research this further if you want.

So, Saul and David came home from battle. The ladies sang their songs of praises to David and Saul. Saul got second billing. He was furious and entertained jealous thoughts. I can imagine Saul sending angry 140 character tweets from his twitter account in the wee hours of the morning.

"Psycho ladies say David had more kills than me. #Fakenews. Don't listen to rigged reviews."

Saul let himself slide down the slippery slope, and then because of his constant refusal to choose humility, an evil spirit saw the open door and entered Saul.

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10...David was playing the harp, as he did each day.

Saul loved to hear David play his harp. When Saul was feeling down and melancholic he would call for David to play for him to soothe him. David was playing the harp, as he did each day.

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But Saul had a spear in his hand,

You gotta know this is not going to end well.

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11 and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice. 12 Saul was then afraid of David, for the Lord was with David and had turned away from Saul.

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13 Finally, Saul sent him away and appointed him commander over 1,000 men, and David faithfully led his troops into battle. 14 David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the Lord was

with him. ¹⁵ When Saul recognized this, he became even more afraid of him. ¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David because he was so successful at leading his troops into battle.

We're not going to read the rest of chapters 18 and 19. Make sure you read it yourself. There is a lot of drama. Saul was looking for ways to kill David by sending him into heavy battles. In the meantime, Saul's daughter, Michal fell in love with David. So, Saul found his chance. He told David that the price for the dowry to marry her would be one hundred Philistine foreskins. He thought for sure that this would get David killed. He came back with two hundred.

So, David and Michal married.

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1 Samuel 18:28–30 (NLT)

²⁸ When Saul realized that the Lord was with David and how much his daughter Michal loved him, ²⁹ Saul became even more afraid of him, and he remained David's enemy for the rest of his life. ³⁰ Every time the commanders of the Philistines attacked, David was more successful against them than all the rest of Saul's officers. So David's name became very famous.

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The rest of Saul's life became about his obsession with killing David. He was a tormented man. It's a very complicated drama. Saul's son, Jonathan was David's best friend. Jonathan saved David's life more than once and pleaded with his dad to come to his senses.

Saul's daughter, Michal, who married David was deeply in love with her husband. Both of which drove Saul nuts. David, on the other hand, always chose the high road. He had many chances to kill Saul and take his rightful place on the throne, but chose instead to let God deal with him. David's heart remained pure.

Saul followed his dark heart of jealousy and resentment and it took him to a darker place of destruction. He was tormented. He entertained every thought of jealousy, envy, bitterness and resentment. Each time he had those thoughts he had a choice to indulge them or to take them captive and slay them.

David followed God's heart for him and made choices along the way to call out to God to save him instead of trying to redeem himself. The stories of David and Saul are stories of contrast. The big difference between the two is revealed back in 1 Samuel 13 when God told Saul that he was going to take the kingdom away from him because of his disobedience.

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1 Samuel 13:14 (NLT)

¹⁴ But now your kingdom must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

Saul's life goal was the exaltation of Saul. He was all about himself. He was about doing whatever he could to manage his image. And anyone who seemed to threaten his image, he crushed. **He was a small man with a big head and a dark hard heart.** He lived a tormented life because he cared more about himself than he did about God and others. He ended his own life, in chapter 31 of 1 Samuel, by falling on his sword instead of allowing the Philistines to capture him. And David mourned his death.

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That's as much of the narrative as we have time to look at this morning. For the remainder of our time I want to take a look at part of a Psalm that David wrote. It gives us a peek into his heart and a key to slaying jealousy in our own hearts. We will see that David's concern was to delight in God and practice trusting him. As we read this, follow along in your Bible or your Bible app and take note of some heart attitudes that helped David avoid jealousy, rivalry, and unhealthy competition.

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Psalm 37 (NLT)

1 Don't worry about the wicked or envy those who do wrong. 2 For like grass, they soon fade away. Like spring flowers, they soon wither. 3 Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. 4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires.

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5 Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. 6 He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. 7 Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.

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8 Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper— it only leads to harm. 9 For the wicked will be destroyed, but those who trust in the Lord will possess the land. 10 Soon the wicked will disappear. Though you look for them, they will be gone. 11 The lowly will possess the land and will live in peace and prosperity.

Here are some keys to slaying jealousy:

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1. **Be aware of your heart.**

Jesus said,

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Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

21 Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

What is that you really care about? What is really important to you? Know your heart. Become aware of your motives. What do you work for? Why do you do the things you do? What drives you? What makes you angry or resentful or jealous?

The way you answer these questions will reveal what the desire of your heart is. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to change our hearts. Did you notice some differences between Saul and David? Saul's heart was for Saul. David's heart was for God. It's very clear when you read the Psalms of David.

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2. **Ask God to reveal your heart to you.** We all have blind spots. Here is what David said in another Psalm.

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Psalm 139:23–24 (NLT)

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Sometimes it's difficult to know our own heart motives. Motives are tricky. We can easily fool ourselves. It is so easy to say that our heart's goal is that God would be glorified in what we do, but then let jealousy take us down that slippery path.

The root of jealousy is fear - fear that we will lose something. Why was Saul jealous of David? He was afraid that others might gain more respect for David than for him. He cared more about his image than he did about the image of God.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts so we care about the things God cares about, and so our hearts break for the things that break God's heart.

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3. **Develop a mindset of abundance, as opposed to a mindset of scarcity.**

We have a wrong idea that if someone else gets praise or accolades it means there is less for us. We wrongly believe that life is like a pie that's brought to a party and there are far more people at the party than pieces of pie. Everyone wants a piece, but there is not enough to go around, so we push our way to the front of the line to make sure we don't get left out.

If you live life like that, jealousy, envy, bitterness, and a whole bunch of other vices will push you down the slippery path to destruction.

David said, "Don't worry when others prosper." It's okay. Let them prosper. Let them win. Don't try to bring them down. There is plenty to go around. Life is not like a pie that has limited pieces. Develop an abundance mindset.

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4. Pray for blessing on those you are jealous of and publicly praise them.

One of the best antidotes to jealousy is to pray for blessing on the person you are jealous of. Praise them even if it's hard at first. Ask God to change your heart while you are doing it. Ask him to help you develop a heart that cares more about him and his glory than your own glory.

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5. Above all, you need to know how much you are loved by God.

This was David's big secret. Read through the Psalms. David was not just in love with God, but more than that he knew that God had an unconditional love for him. If you know this, you can overcome anything.

Let me close by reading a quote from Romans.

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Romans 8:31–39 (NLT)

³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.

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³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. ³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

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³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. ³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

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³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is no greater truth than this: Jesus loves me, this I know. When we truly know that from our hearts it really does change everything. There is nothing you can do make God love you any more that he already does, and there is nothing you can do to make him love you less. He loves you completely and unconditionally - period.



**Living in HisStory: Revealing the True Wonder of Who God Is
Slaying Jealousy**

1 Samuel 18-19; 31:1-2; 2 Samuel 9:1-7

Psalm 37:1-11; Romans 8:31-39

Week of January 14, 2018

Objective of this study: To understand how to overcome jealousy.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Psalm 37:1-11** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. **Did anything “jump out at you”?**

Welcome (5 minutes)

Facebook - love or hate it? Why? How does it affect you when you spend too much time on it?

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to *your* heart.]

Word/Work (60-90 minutes)

1. Read 1 Samuel 18:1-16
 1. Do quick recap of Saul's life pointing out some highs and lows, and victories and failures. (Flip through 1 Samuel beginning at chapter 9)
2. What are some things jealousy robs us of?
3. What are some things you are tempted to be jealous of?
 1. Divide into groups and assign each group one of the following passages to read. **Be sure to pay attention to the context** of the passage. What can we take from it about how to deal with jealousy in our own lives? Regroup and share your findings.
 1. Luke 9:46-48
 2. Luke 22:24-27
 3. John 4:34-38
 4. James 3:13-18
 5. Ephesians 4:14-16
 6. Galatians 5:13-26
 7. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27
4. What are some things you can do to combat jealousy?

Prayer

1. Spend some time in prayer. Start by worshipping God for who he is and what he has done. Focus on being grateful. Pray about the things you discussed in the study.
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:
 - A. Praise God that he met all our needs financially last year.
 - B. That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.
 - C. Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus
 - D. River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.
 - E. **Our missionary of the month:** Aaron and Julie Gole at Camp Homewood
 - F. **Our missionary of the week:** Brody and Allison Naknakim
 - G. **Local CR church:** Radiant Life Church - Pastor Art and Sally Van Holst