

**Contrast: The Difference of a Life In Christ
Security vs. Insecurity – Part 3
1 Samuel 20**

Introduction: Today, we look at the third chapter of 1 Samuel, which directly addresses the contrast between a secure person in Christ and an insecure person. Chapter 18 is mainly about David and the actions of his life that clearly demonstrate his security as a man. Chapter 19 focused heavily on Saul's actions and the clear testimony of an insecure man. The final chapter of our little series within a series focuses on Jonathan, Saul's son. David and Saul are both present in it, but Jonathan is the main character in this chapter, and as a man who genuinely loved God and people, we will see an obvious testimony of a man who is secure in who he is in God.

Proposition: The story of 1 Samuel 20 has three parts that point us to an essential Gospel Truth for living a secure life.

In the first part of the story, we learn that,

(1) Jonathan was innocently ignorant about his dad, Saul. (20:1-3)

- A. Before we get into chapter twenty, let me quickly remind you of what got us here.
 1. In chapter 19, David's wife, Michal, finds out Saul is going to kill him and helps David sneak out of their house undetected. However, when Saul was finally made aware that she had helped David escape, she lied and said it was because David threatened to kill her if she didn't. Understandably, she cracked under the pressure of her father, whom she had good reason to fear. Nonetheless, this gave Saul what he needed to justify his call for David to be executed, despite the fact Saul vowed never to do it.
 2. Eventually, Saul, who was in his hometown of Gibeah, discovered David was about two miles away. David was hiding out with Samuel and the prophets in training under him. So Saul sent some of his men to go get David so that he could execute him in front of everybody and thus, in his mind, prove he was the true champion of Israel. But each time a new group of men showed up, they ended up rolling around on the ground naked in a prophetic trance that left them incapable of fulfilling their mission. Therefore, Saul, in his ignorant arrogance, said he would go and get David himself, seemingly believing if he went, the Holy Spirit of God wouldn't be able to overtake him. However, the Bible says,
 3. **23 And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went, he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied**

before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 19:23-24)

4. Saul was overtaken by the Holy Spirit and started prophesying before he even got to the green pastures (Naioth) in Ramah. When he finally arrived, he ended up stripping off all his clothes and joined in with the other men under the control of the Holy Spirit, who were apparently already naked and uncontrollably wallowing around on the ground, prophesying. For more on what it meant that they were "prophesying," check out last week's sermon.
5. The big point is that the Holy Spirit forced them into an ecstatic trance for the rest of the day and all night, allowing David to go back to Gibeah undetected. This is where chapter 20 picks up.

B. 1 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

Note: David understandably couldn't grasp why Saul was trying to kill him. All he had done was be all in serving him, so much so that despite being the champion of Israel, he was still willing to put aside all that glory and stand in the background and essentially play an ancient harp while everybody else did the important stuff! In addition, it also appears David had no idea that his wife Michal betrayed him. David was understandably clueless, but surprisingly, so was Saul's son Jonathan. Look how Jonathan responded,

C. 2 And he said to him, "Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so."

Note: This is where it becomes painfully clear that Jonathan is completely blind about his father. When we read the Bible, we see Saul for who he is, but Jonathan isn't reading this story; he's living his life as the son of Saul. Jonathan is totally wrong about his father, but because it's his dad, whom he likely has all kinds of really good experiences with, his heart is understandably blind to the fact that his dad is an entirely insecure, out-of-control, sociopathic narcissist. No matter how obvious the truth is, when our hearts only want to see the good in somebody, that's all we will likely see.

Note: "9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

D. 3 But David vowed again, saying, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death."

1. David's consistent service to Saul after Saul tried to kill him with his own spear twice, and after Saul had on multiple occasions tried to take advantage of his loyalty to get him killed in battle, showed that David had been blind about Saul as well. David was likely ecstatic about Saul being King; therefore, getting to work for the King was huge! So, it's not surprising that, like Jonathan, his heart blinded him to the reality that Saul was flat-out evil.
2. However, this last attempt to kill him came after Saul swore that as long as God was alive, he wouldn't execute David (1 Samuel 19:6), opened David's eyes to all that had previously happened. Breaking a vow that he essentially made in God's name finally woke David up to the painful truth that the man he looked up to, admired, and truly loved serving was a self-centered maniac intent on killing him.
3. In addition, once David understood that Saul actually hated him, he apparently also started to realize that he couldn't trust Jonathan's perspective about Saul either. This wasn't because Jonathan was also an untrustworthy man but rather because Saul knew they were best friends; he intentionally hid things from Jonathan and manipulated him.

In the second part of the story, we see that,

(2) Jonathan deepened his covenant with David and agreed to objectively test his dad's heart. (20:4-23)

- A. David, understanding that Saul is Jonathan's dad and therefore the understandable blindness Jonathan would have towards his dad, proposed a way for Jonathan to find out who his dad really was.
- B. **4 Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."
5 David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.' 7 If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him.**
 1. "The new moon, the beginning of a new month, was an occasion for various festivities (see Numbers 28:11–15; 29:6; Ezra 3:5; Psalm 81:3). Despite the troubles of recent times, David was still Saul's son-in-law and an esteemed warrior and would be expected to join the king at his table. David's plan appears to have been to determine, for himself as well as for Jonathan, whether Saul's murderous intentions toward him persisted. David needed to know this, for he could not return to Saul's presence unless the danger had

passed. Saul had relented once, under the influence of Jonathan's persuasive words (1 Samuel 19:6). Perhaps the power of the Spirit of God (1 Samuel 19:23) had brought him to a better mind again. If so, David could return. If not, he dare not. Hence the plan."¹

2. Wisely, David had no intention of getting around Saul until it was proven Saul wasn't going to try and kill him. Therefore, he recommends a way of interpreting Saul's response to his absence from a monthly new moon festival. If Saul was angry about David attending what must be presumed to be a significantly important annual event for a person's ancestral clan to properly worship the Lord instead of a much less important monthly festival, then both Jonathan and David would know Saul was determined to kill David no matter what.
3. David then demonstrates his objectivity and loyalty.

C. 8 Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

1. "When David said, "But if there is guilt in me," he apparently meant, "if I have broken this agreement, if I have threatened Saul in any way, if I have done him any harm." In that case the agreement between Jonathan and David would have been broken, and Jonathan would have no obligation toward David. He might as well kill him himself."²
2. David literally tells Jonathan if you think for one second I'm not loyal to you and your dad or that I've threatened to kill your sister (the lie Saul is likely spreading because Michal said it herself), then I lay myself before you to kill me right now! I'll bow my head before you and let you kill me if you think I'm guilty!

D. 9 And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that harm should come to you, would I not tell you?"

1. "When David said, "But if there is guilt in me," he apparently meant, "if I have broken this agreement, if I have threatened Saul in any way, if I have done him any harm." In that case the agreement between Jonathan and David would have been broken, and Jonathan would have no obligation toward David. He might as well kill him himself."³

¹ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader*](#) (p. 388). Crossway Books.

² Woodhouse, J. (2008). [*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader*](#) (p. 389). Crossway Books.

³ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader*](#) (p. 390). Crossway Books.

2. When Jonathan responds with a resounding, "Far be it from you!" We see that he's kind of offended that David would even remotely suggest that there could be any ill will from him toward David. Jonathan, therefore, defends his innocence about his dad by assuring David that if he knew his dad had gone back on his word, then he would have most certainly done something about it.

E. 10 Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?" 11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field. 12 And Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? 13 But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. 14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16 And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies." 17 And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

1. Verse 15 shows us that Jonathan fully believed God had called David to be the next King of Israel, and as such, God would defeat all his enemies and establish him as such. In addition, it appears that Jonathan had clearly started realizing his dad was likely going to be confirmed as one of David's enemies; therefore, he asks David not to kill him nor remove his commitment to him as a brother when he becomes King.
2. Why would Jonathan feel the need to say that? It was very typical, and even expected, for a person who defeated a King who set himself up as an enemy of that person to not only kill the King when he defeated him but also kill his entire family, especially his sons. It sounds harsh, but a Kingdom was typically run not only by the King but all of his family members, especially his sons, who would themselves have aspirations to be King. Therefore, it's to no surprise then that Jonathan is uncertain if he will survive God overthrowing Saul and his government (verse 14), given his dad has set his house against the house of David; but if Jonathan does survive what he is sure will be God's wrath against his dad and his entire family and government, then he wants to be assured that David will not then kill him.
3. Likewise, verse 17 isn't a surprise either. As much as David truly loved Jonathan as a brother, it's understandable that David is a bit paranoid! After all, Saul had tried to kill David not long after Jonathan assured him that his Dad swore on the life of God that he wouldn't be put to death. Therefore,

Jonathan recommends a plan for David to be safely informed of the outcome of their test.

F. 18 Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 On the third day go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain beside the stone heap. 20 And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. 21 And behold, I will send the young man, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. 22 But if I say to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then go, for the LORD has sent you away. 23 And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever."

1. Verse 21 lets us see another testimony of the spiritual depth of Jonathan, who is secure enough in who he is to embrace David as the next King rather than himself! In verse 21, Jonathan is sure that whatever the outcome is, God is in charge and ordering it; whether that's the optimistic outcome he hopes for that his dad has genuinely repented of his insecurity and dropped his crusade against David or hasn't either way, God would be protecting David by exposing the truth about Saul.
2. In verse 23, Jonathan assures David that God has bound them together as brothers forever, and therefore, nothing, including his father, would cause Jonathan to turn his back on David. God is between them, not in the sense of keeping them apart, but in keeping them together.

In the third part of the story, we see that,

(3) Johnathan proved his loyalty to David when he saw his father's insecure, self-centered, foolish heart. (20:24-42)

A. 24 So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. 25 The king sat on his seat, as at other times, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26 Yet Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean."

1. "Not clean" means he assumes David to be ceremonially unclean and unable to participate in societal functions until he has been purged of his uncleanness. For instance, in Numbers 19:11-13, if a person touched a dead body, they were unclean for seven days.

2. However, why would Saul think David would be at the festival? The fact Saul assumed this should have proven to Saul that David was a loyal guy!! Either way, Saul may have assumed David didn't know about all he had done to kill him; therefore, after finding out David was no longer in Ramah, Saul may have assumed David had gone back to Gibeah. After all, David had overlooked previous attempts by Saul to kill him, so it's not entirely over the top for Saul to assume David had done it again, especially given the fact he wasn't privy to the conversations Jonathan was having with David.
3. At this point, things look good for David! From Jonathan's perspective, the fact that his dad wasn't raising a stink about David's absence had to be a positive sign! But history tells us we shouldn't expect Saul to continue down the path of giving David the benefit of the doubt. By the second day of the three-day festival, Saul's true nature emerged big time.

B. 27 But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"

Note: Saul already knows his son Jonathan is the person most likely to know what's going on with David. Remember, Jonathan went to Saul at the beginning of chapter 18 and got him to vow never to execute David.

C. 28 Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. 29 He said, 'Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table." 30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?" 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

Note: To begin, Saul doesn't appear to think very highly of his wife! He called her a "perverse, rebellious woman." But he takes it to a whole other level when he adds, "to the shame of your mother's nakedness." Saul is implying that Jonathan's mother's only reason for giving herself sexually to him was that she could conceive and bear a son to inherit the throne. Therefore, from Saul's perspective, if Jonathan is now helping David, he is disregarding his birthright and turning his mother's sexual activity with Saul into a pointless action and, thus, a shameful action. What a sad reality that Saul didn't believe his wife Ahinoam wanted to have sex with him out of her love for him, but rather only to conceive children and increase her own standing in the Kingdom. It's becoming very clear that Saul doesn't believe anybody loves him, no matter how much they show it.

D. 32 Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" 33 But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. 34 And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

1. You read that right. Saul, who luckily had bad aim with his spear, tries to kill Jonathan with it! How crazy is that!
2. It is also unclear if the person "disgraced" in verse 34 is Jonathan or David. If it's Jonathan, it's because his Dad, whom he clearly loves and faithfully serves, just tried to kill him in front of everybody for doing nothing but telling him the truth. On the other hand, if it's David, it shows us just how committed Jonathan was to his belief that God had anointed David to be the next King.
3. Either way, Jonathan is now abundantly clear on the extreme nature of Saul's insecurity and just how dangerously irrational he had become. Thus, Jonathan must now confirm David's conclusion about Saul to be true. It's easy to imagine how painful this must have been for Jonathan. There is nothing positive for him to take from this. Jonathan's father tried to kill him and did so because he hated David more than he loved Jonathan.
4. We can only be driven by hate when what we hate is more significant than what we love. Insecure people can never be driven by love because it's all about serving others. However, hate is all about yourself. It's all about attacking what you consider to be a threat, and for insecure people, the list of threats includes everything and everybody; a list that eventually includes themselves. Hate comes as naturally to insecure people as love does to those who are secure.
5. So Jonathan sets off to inform David. Here's how the story ends.

E. 35 In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little boy. 36 And he said to his boy, "Run and find the arrows that I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the boy came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" 38 And Jonathan called after the boy, "Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!" So Jonathan's boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master. 39 But the boy knew nothing. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, "Go and carry them to the city." 41 And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And

they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most. 42 Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.'" And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

- F. "The kiss, of course, must be understood in the context. In the Old Testament the kiss was an expression of friendship, but also of veneration. Samuel had kissed Saul when he anointed him as king (1 Samuel 10:1). Kisses will appear in the story of David with a variety of political motives, both good and bad (see 2 Samuel 14:33; 15:5; 19:39; 20:9). Perhaps the most astonishing reference to kissing in the Old Testament is Psalm 2, where the kings of the earth are called to "kiss the Son" (v. 12), that is, the Lord's anointed King. There the kiss is an expression of submission and acknowledgment, a reversal of the raging and plotting against the Lord and his Anointed at the beginning of the psalm. None of this is to suggest that the kissing at the farewell between David and Jonathan did not express genuine affection. It just suggests that it also involved a mutual recognition of their present positions and the future that Jonathan in particular could see. David's kiss was the very opposite of any form of hostility toward the heir to Saul's throne. Jonathan's kiss expressed his glad acceptance of David as the future king he knew that he would be. What are we to make of their weeping? It is true that these tears must have been the tears of farewell between two friends. The events of this chapter had led them both to the conclusion that the Lord had "sent [David] away" (vv. 13, 22). More than this, however, it seems likely that the two friends wept at the circumstances that had made this departure necessary—namely, the hostility of Saul toward David that meant Jonathan had to choose between David and his father. Neither David nor Jonathan wanted enmity with Saul, but Saul had made it unavoidable. There was tragedy in that. You might think that it was Jonathan who had lost the most in this situation, but David wept the most. David had no desire to harm Saul, nor to destroy Saul's relationship with his son. The damage was all Saul's doing. It was no less tragic for that."⁴
- G. Of this emotional departure, J.D. Phillips wrote, **"Anyone who is put off by this show of affection between godly men knows nothing of the close bond of wartime comrades, childhood friends, or covenant brothers in the Lord. Nor do we appreciate the gravity of their lamentable situation if we think their tears an unmanly display. On the eve of the American Civil War, Lewis Armistead and Winfield Scott Hancock spent a night weeping together as they departed for the war, one to assume command in the Southern army and the other in the North. Both would bitterly lament their parting, especially on the day when, as Armistead died and Hancock lay bleeding, their respective commands clashed in the climactic assault of the Battle of Gettysburg. Men of great feeling will exhibit emotion not only over their**

⁴ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader*](#) (p. 405). Crossway Books.

victories and losses, but also over lost and parted comrades. David and Jonathan likewise parted for their duties on opposite sides of the conflict about to begin."⁵

So, once again, we see insecurity and security in this narrative, but how do we keep insecurity from being the narrative of our lives? How can the story of our lives be one of somebody secure in who they are instead of insecure?

Well, so far, we've looked at two keys to living a secure life in Christ.

Security Key #1: Define your value by God's appraisal (the blood of Jesus), not man's!

Security Key #2: Believe your future in Christ is guaranteed and better than anything this world offers.

And as promised, here's the third Gospel key for living a secure life.

Security Key #3: Believe that you are loved by God and those who know God's love.

Now, that key has two sides, so let me address the second thing I said about the third key first.

You should never be shocked that people who don't know God loves them don't love you. I'm not saying they can't love you, nor that you shouldn't love them, but rather that they can't love you with God's love unless they first know God's love! Consequently, if they do know God's love, they are incapable of not loving you! John wrote,

10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)

20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; (1 John 4:20a)

The point I'm making here is that we shouldn't be bothered by those who don't love us. Instead, we should be bothered that they don't know Jesus! I don't need to be angry with people who hate me; I need to be broken for them and pray for them because they clearly don't know the love of Christ, not because I'm so lovable, but rather because it is impossible to do anything but love if you've met love—GOD, who is LOVE (1 John 4:8)!

Therefore, everybody who knows Jesus loves them will genuinely love us; we must believe that! Saul was so insecure he could never believe anybody loved him, including the ones who couldn't do anything but love him! He didn't seem to believe his wife loved him. He

⁵ Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#) (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.; 1st ed., p. 359). P&R Publishing.

also didn't believe David, who constantly put his life on the line for him and then happily stood in the corner and played music for him, loved him. Saul didn't even believe Jonathan, the son who loved him so much he was trying to rescue him from destroying his own life, loved him.

If you can't believe people love you, then you will never be secure in who you are, especially if you can't believe the people who know God loves them don't love you, which takes us to the first thing I said about the third key. You and I have to believe GOD loves us! Again, John wrote,

9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:9-11)

You can't truly know love if you don't know and believe in God's love, the love that was manifested in the person and work of Christ on Calvary, where He gave his life as a propitiation, that is, as the satisfaction of God's righteous judgment of our sin. He placed himself on the cross as our substitute so that he could suffer once and for all what we could never finish suffering! The price of sin is to be eternally separated from God—death. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who had never known separation from God, experienced it fully for us! We can neither love God nor others until we understand His love for us! We are incapable of it.

But church, if you know God's love but never believe it, then that knowledge is useless. If you treat God like Saul treated everybody around him, never trusting the clear demonstration of His sincere and eternal love for you to be that, then you will NEVER experience a life of security.

So today, will you repent of your unwillingness to trust the truth? Will you be honest that the root cause of your inability to love others and be loved by others is because you refuse to accept the death of Jesus as a clear enough testimony of God's love to never again allow yourself to believe the lie that God doesn't love you? Will you finally be honest about why you are insecure and embrace the quintessential truth to be secure?