

# Behaving Ourselves Wisely

1Sam 18

1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. 5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. 6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. 7 And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. 8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? 9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. 10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. 11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice. 12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. 13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. 14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with

him. 15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. 17 And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him. 18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? 19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife. 20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in *the one of the twain*. 22 And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law. 23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a light thing* to be a king's son in law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed? 24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David. 25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. 27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. 28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him. 29 And Saul was yet the more

afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually. 30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

### Introduction:

1. In these verses of Scripture we read 4x that David, in his early life, behaved himself wisely
2. If God says something one time, we ought to pay attention and heed His Word, but if He emphasizes something again and again, we really ought to pay attention to what He has said.
3. This biblical truth (behaving wisely) is needful in our day.
  - a. We live in the midst of some very trying times spiritually.
  - b. Our world grows darker and more sinful with each passing day.
  - c. Our testimony is the one thing that we cannot afford to compromise or lose.
  - d. We need to behave wisely because people are watching the way we live
    1. Jesus said that we should let our light shine so that people could see our good works and glorify God - they are watching
    2. It is easy to talk the talk, but the world wants to see you walk the walk.
    3. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then he had Uriah, her husband, killed. Nathan, the prophet of God, showed up and told David a parable. David ended up admitting that he had sinned against the Lord. Then Nathan explained the worst part of this sin.... “By this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme...” 2Sam 12:14

4. I'd hate to stand before the Lord someday and hear Him say, "Tim, because of your sin you have given the enemies of God great occasion to blaspheme my Holy name."
5. That is the opposite of what I want to do. I want my life and actions to give lost people occasion to glorify God.
6. Behave wisely because people are watching.
7. Behaving ourselves wisely has the idea of "*being prudent; circumspect; wise; giving attention to.*"
8. I think that the NT equivalent is found in Eph 5:15-16  
*15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*
9. We need to behave wisely because we have a real enemy who seeks to destroy our testimonies and we must continually be on guard
10. Will Houghton, was a preacher who became the president of Moody Bible Institute during the 1940s. He played a large role in the conversion of an agnostic who was contemplating suicide. The skeptic was desperate, but he decided that if he could find a minister who lived his faith he would listen to him. So he hired a private detective to watch Houghton. When the investigator's report came back, it revealed that this preacher's life was above reproach; he was for real. The agnostic went to Houghton's church, accepted Christ, and later sent his daughter to Moody Bible Institute.

4. I want to take a few moments to consider the principles involved in:  
Behaving Ourselves Wisely.
5. These verses reveal three areas in which we need to behave ourselves wisely.

## I. BEHAVE WISELY IN YOUR WORK - VS 5

5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

- This verse deals with how David handled the duties he had been given
- We need to behave ourselves wisely in our work for the Lord
- Notice that this involves.....

### A. **An Attitude of Readiness - vs 5a**

5a And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him...

1. David was a young man who had already enjoyed much success in his life
  - a) *Already anointed king*
  - b) *Already defeated Goliath*
2. It would have been easy for David to grow complacent and arrogant after such successes
3. Others might have reached the point where they felt certain tasks were beneath them.
4. David developed an attitude of readiness and obedience
  - a) *He was prepared and willing to do whatever was expected of him.*
  - b) *There is no mention of David arguing or trying to pass his work off on someone else.*
  - c) *He readily embraced whatever was asked and went wherever he was sent.*
5. Submitting to those in authority is wise behavior
  - a) *Some say, "No one is going to tell me what to do."*
  - b) *Some say, "I don't have to listen to you, you're not my boss."*
  - c) *David knew that one day he would be king. But until then Saul was king and David submitted to his authority*
  - d) *Bumper sticker - "Question Authority"*

- e) *So many people are questioning authority today that the authority structure barely exists*
- 6. Our churches need believers who have this same attitude of readiness
  - a) *There are no unimportant tasks when it comes to serving the Lord.*
  - b) *We ought to be happy to serve whenever and wherever the Lord desires.*
  - c) *May we never get too proud to humble ourselves in service to the Lord and others!*

## **B. An Awareness of Responsibility - vs 5b**

**5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely; and Saul set him over the men of war...**

1. This was no small task that David was assigned
  - a) *He had proven himself courageous as he stood before Goliath while the others cowered in fear.*
  - b) *David submitted to King Saul's authority and that submission made him competent to lead others*
  - c) *Those who would lead must first learn to submit*
  - d) *Because of his bravery, submission and God's working in his life, Saul promoted David to captain of the armies of Israel.*
2. This was an enormous responsibility for a young man, but David behaved himself wisely in regard to his responsibilities.
  - a) *He had been elevated to a place of position and authority, but he did not seek to use his position for personal gain.*
  - b) *David was the chosen heir to the throne and yet he waited upon the Lord to advance him rather than seeking to overthrow Saul.*
3. We, believers, need to be aware of the responsibilities that have been given to us
  - a) *God chooses certain individuals to lead*

- b) *But that does not mean that they can promote their own agenda and manipulate people.*
  - c) *He has not called us to lord it over His heritage; we are merely servants of the Master!*
4. Let us be aware of our responsibilities and serve the Lord wisely, in a way that honors Him and encourages other believers
  5. We need those who will seek the glory of God and the good of the church over their personal wants and desires.

### **c. An Admirable Reputation - vs 5c**

**5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.**

1. As David behaved himself wisely he earned the respect of the people of Israel and even the servants of Saul.
  - a) *Through submission and obedience David honed the skills of leadership*
  - b) *King Saul recognized David's leadership ability and promoted him*
  - c) *Those who were led by David recognized his competent leadership (compared to King Saul) and he developed an excellent reputation as a leader*
2. He served patiently and faithfully in every aspect of life and he was noticed and respected for that.
  - a) *The women knew about David's excellence. They sang about King Saul killing thousands and David his ten thousands*
  - b) *They were saying that King Saul was a good general but David was a great general*
  - c) *This tells me that my success in ministry is contingent on my being absolutely committed to each task that God puts in my hands.*
  - d) *I don't know about you brethren but for me, "Good enough is not*

*good enough.”*

- e) *I taught high school for ten years and there were students who were happy to just get by. “All right C-, yippee.”*
  - f) *The mediocrity of this age is pathetic and it comes from people who said, “I’m going to do just enough to get by.”*
3. How many times have we heard the expression, "I don't care what people think of me."
- a) *God has not called us to please men, but we ought to care how the world perceives us.*
  - b) *We are ambassadors of the King.*
  - c) *If you are a member of this church, then you are a representative of this church.*
  - d) *That distinction goes with you wherever you go.*
4. We have an obligation and responsibility to behave ourselves in such a way that pleases and honors the Lord.
- a) *Every child of God should earn the respect of those around him.*
  - b) *The lost world might not be interested in our faith, but they will notice the commitment and persistence of our faith.*
  - c) *Every believer ought to be recognized as one who lives above reproach.*
5. Willie Mays observed, "Almost anybody can be good at what they do once in a while. It's being good every day that separates the good from the great." When everyone around you is taking the shortcut to success, stay on the extra mile.

Behave Wisely in Your Work....

## **II. BEHAVE WISELY IN YOUR WALK - VS 14-15**

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him. 15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

- These verses reveal the walk of David before men

### A. **A Walk of Integrity - vs 14a**

14a And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways....

1. David's life was not hypocritical - he didn't behave one way in public and another way in private
  - a) *Every area of David's life was handled with discretion and integrity*
  - b) *He lived wisely before those who knew him and in every situation he was a man of integrity*
2. Our nation is in desperate need of leadership
  - a) *Oh for leaders who would live a life of integrity before others and the Lord*
  - b) *Integrity is not measured by who we are in public but who we are in private when no one else is present*
3. It is not enough to just serve the Lord during a worship service; but we must continue to serve Him and walk uprightly out in the world as well.

### B. **A Walk of Intimacy - vs 14b**

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.

1. We learn a lot about David here, but this is the most profound thing - The Lord was with him
  - a) *David did not walk alone*
  - b) *David lived a life that honored God and God honored David with His presence*

2. Having the Lord's presence would be invaluable to David
  - a) *David would face great adversity and he would need guidance and protection from King Saul*
  - b) *For a dozen years King Saul would pursue David*
3. We need to be believers who walk with God
  - a) *I want to enjoy the presence and power of God in my life*
  - b) *Let's live lives that are pleasing to the Lord so that we can experience His power in our lives*
  - c) *Draw nigh the Lord so that we can serve Him and prosper in His work*

4. Keep your eyes on the Lord

Once a father took his three sons on a winter hike. They came to a field glistening white from a snow the night before. There was not a single track of any kind that had been made in the field. The father, wanting to challenge his youngsters and perhaps teach them a lesson suggested they have a contest: Which one could walk the straightest path across the field? The first trudged across the field keeping his eyes down to watch each step, trying to put each foot directly in front of the other. When he reached the other side, he looked back, and to his surprise the tracks were curved like the letter "S" in their course. The second lad started, taking a few steps and then looking back to see if his path appeared straight. About every ten to fifteen steps the process was repeated. When he finished he eagerly surveyed the entirety of his course, but discovered it wasn't really straight at all - it was in segments, veering to right, and then to the left. The third, seeing the other two had failed, employed a different strategy! He looked directly at his father who stood on the opposite end of the field. He walked toward his father, never taking his eyes off of him. Having completed the trek, his path was the straightest of the three by

far. The wise father then taught the boys, saying, "Sons, there is just ONE path in life that is straight and true, and that is the way of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). As you go through life, keep your eyes on Him,

### **c. A Walk of Influence - vs 15**

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

1. Saul was the king and David but a youth and yet the king was afraid of him
  - a) *Saul did not fear David because David stature or physical ability*
  - b) *It wasn't because David had defeated Goliath*
2. Saul feared David because David behaved himself wisely in all his ways
  - a) *King Saul knew that David was different*
  - b) *He knew that God's hand was on David*
  - c) *David influenced King Saul*
3. Are our lives, lives of influence?
  - a) *Are you making a difference to those around you?*
  - b) *I want to live in such a way that people notice that there is a difference*
  - c) *I want others to know that I am a Christian*

Behave Wisely in Your Walk....

### **iii. BEHAVE WISELY IN YOUR WITNESS - VS 30**

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

#### **A. When Faced with Difficulty - vs 30a**

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth...

1. David had defeated the mighty giant, but that didn't shield him from times of difficulty
  - a) *Just because David had won a battle does not mean that he had won the war*
  - b) *Difficulty and adversity remained even after a great victory*
  - c) *David handled his difficulties wisely and with integrity*
2. It is easy to become impatient and defensive when we are faced with difficulty
  - a) *The adversary knows our weaknesses and if he can cause us to become frustrated in difficulty then he will defeat us every time*
  - b) *We can overcome with the help of the Lord*

Php 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

## **B. When Faced with Decision - vs 30b**

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul...

1. The enemies were approaching and David had to decide how he would respond
2. From time to time we all have to make difficult decisions
  - a) *In these moments of decision we need to behave ourselves wisely*
  - b) *We need to know when to move forward and when to stand still*
  - c) *We need to know when to engage the enemy and when to refrain*
  - d) *Sometimes we must stand and fight and at other times the best action is inaction*

### **C. When Faced with Distinction - vs 30c**

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.*

1. This was a difficult time for the people of God.
  - a) *They faced a formidable adversary and many were consumed with fear.*
  - b) *Their lives were lived in the shadow of war and their joy was fading.*
  - c) *The people needed someone to rise above and give them hope.*
  - d) *They needed someone to lead them and offer guidance.*
  - e) *They needed one who would be an example unto them.*
2. Through the help and guidance of the Lord David rose to the occasion.
  - a) *As the nation looked on in fear, David took the lead.*
  - b) *He behaved himself wisely and the people took notice.*
  - c) *He was esteemed highly among his peers.*
3. A word of caution is in order here.
  - a) *For a man of war, this was likely a time of temptation for David.*
  - b) *It would've been easy to have become proud.*
  - c) *David had experienced victory before, but it was God who gave the victory. David was just used of the Lord.*
4. Even as the people looked on and sang his praises, David continued to behave himself wisely.
  - a) *He knew that apart from God he was weak and vulnerable.*
  - b) *David handled his prosperity and popularity wisely.*
5. There is nothing wrong with enjoying our success and victories as long as we acknowledge God's provision.
  - a) *Apart from Him we are nothing.*

- b) We must be careful to give God all the glory, great things HE hath done!*
6. If we will walk wisely in humility, God will honor our efforts.
- a) If we get to the place that we think we can handle it on our own, He may just let us give it a try.*
- b) I can assure you that the results will not be what we desired.*
- c) We must behave ourselves wisely in every facet of life.*
- d) We must face each day with a desire and determination to live as God would have us to.*

## Conclusion:

1. David's success began on a Judean hillside when he was just a kid
  - a. Each night young David watched faithfully over his flock
  - b. He looked up at the starry night sky and penned the words, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
  - c. He had fought a lion and a bear in order to protect those sheep.
  - d. He looked out over that flock and he knew the name of every sheep. And he realized that "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."
  - e. The key to David's success was that as a young man he came to know God personally and fully.
2. God honored and blessed David as long as he behaved himself wisely.
  - a. Sadly there came a day when David made choices that were not wise
  - b. He paid a heavy price for his departure from wisdom
3. Our purpose today is not to idolize David, but to emulate him
  - a. David behaved himself wisely and God was with him
  - b. I want to behave myself wisely so that God will be with me
4. How are things in your life today?
  - a. Are you behaving yourself wisely?

b. Or have you decided to make your own choices and chart your own course?

5. Trouble awaits the believer who strays from the paths of God.

6. Ed Spencer was attending Northwestern University at Evanston, Il. Ed was a rather well known athlete of his day, for he was one of the first to win a gold medal for the United States in the Olympics. The campus of Northwestern is bordered on one side by Lake Michigan. One evening, as Ed was studying in the library, and outside a storm was raging. All of a sudden some students ran into the library shouting, “A ship has been thrown into the rocks and is sinking!” Ed ran from the library out to the beach and he saw that the situation was indeed serious. Without a moment’s hesitation, he rid himself of any extra clothing that might hinder him and he dove into the rolling, choppy waves. He swam out to the ship and, fighting his way back, brought the first person to safety. He repeated this heroic effort several more times and those on the shore said, “You’ve done all you can. You’ll surely kill yourself if you try to save anyone else.” Ed’s reply was, “I’ve got to do my best.” He plunged into the water again and brought another to safety, then another and another until he had rescued 17 people. He could go no further and fell unconscious on the shore. All through the night, as he lay in the infirmary, he kept asking, “Have I done my best? Have I done my best?” He had done his best but the experience cost him his health. Years later, Ensign Edward Young, inspired by this story, wrote the hymn, “Have I Done My Best for Jesus?”