

David Hides from Saul

(1 Samuel 24; 26)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Tell me about a time someone was mean to you? What did you do? When someone does something mean to you, what do you normally want to do in return? Yeah, you want to do something mean back – and even a little more than they did to you.

Our scripture today says we are not to repay evil for evil. That's hard, isn't it! Instead, God tells us to love our enemies and do good to them.

David had a problem like that. In our Bible story today, we'll find out what David did.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us to have good listening ears this morning and give us teachable hearts for I know that You want to teach us how to respond to people when they are mean to us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right.
(Romans 12:17 NKJ)*

Lesson

Last week we learned that even though David had been one of Saul's most loyal and helpful men, Saul became insanely jealous of David's popularity with the people. He became so jealous, in fact, that he wanted to murder David. So, David had to leave the palace.

From then on, David lived a very hard life. He slept in the forest or caves in the mountains. Wherever we went, Saul chased after him and who ever helped David was in terrible trouble.

One time when he was searching for David, Saul went into a cave. Little did he know that it was the very cave where David and his men were hiding. Let's read what happened...

1 Samuel 24:3-4

At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave! "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'" So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.

Saul walked right into the very cave that David and his men were in! This was David's chance to get Saul. David's men wanted to attack him right there and then. But even though Saul wanted to kill David; David did NOT want to hurt Saul. Quiet as a shadow, David slipped up to Saul, took out his knife, but instead of killing him, David just cut a piece off of Saul's robe.

Wow! Could you do that? Have you ever wanted to get even with someone who was mean to you?

If you had just spent the last few years of your life running and hiding from someone that was out to kill you, what would you do if that very person walked right into your cave? When someone is being mean to you, it's easy to want to get even and be mean right back, isn't it? But David knew that wouldn't please God. David showed respect for Saul. After all, Saul was the King of Israel.

He let Saul leave the cave unharmed.

1 Samuel 24:9

Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you?"

David pleaded with Saul, "You must believe that I do not want to harm you, I could have killed you just now if I had wished. Look!" And, he held up the piece of Saul's robe to show him how close he was. This made Saul feel ashamed.

1 Samuel 24:17-19

And he said to David, "You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil. Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the LORD put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn't do it. Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the LORD reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today."

Even though King Saul was glad David did not kill him, it wasn't long before Saul was chasing David again! David knew that Saul's feelings towards him had not really changed.

Saul took 3,000 soldiers and went looking for David. Saul and his big army camped for the night near a hill; Saul slept in the middle of the soldiers with his sword and a water jug next to his head.

1 Samuel 26:7

So David and Abishai went right into Saul's camp and found him asleep, with his spear stuck in the ground beside his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying asleep around him.

Here again, David had the perfect opportunity to get Saul. What would you do if you were David?

1 Samuel 26:8

"God has surely handed your enemy over to you this time!" Abishai whispered to David. "Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't need to strike twice!"

Abishai begged David to let him kill Saul. He said he could do him in with one blow! But David would not allow any harm come to Saul.

So, David and Abishai quietly made their way down to Saul's camp, tiptoeing between the sleeping soldiers to get to Saul.

Let's read what they did next...

1 Samuel 26:12

So David took the spear and jug of water that were near Saul's head. Then he and Abishai got away without anyone seeing them or even waking up, because the LORD had put Saul's men into a deep sleep.

Wow! David sneaked into the middle of the camp where Saul was sleeping and took his spear and his water jug!

David could have taken Saul's life, but he didn't.

When David was safely away, he woke up Saul and all his men by shouting, "Who's guarding the king of Israel? Where are the water jug and the spear that were beside his head?"

Once again, Saul realized that David spared his life and didn't try to get even with him.

Even though Saul was mean to David, David showed God's love to Saul.

What do you do when someone is mean to you? When someone is mean to us, we usually feel like being mean back, don't we? But God wants to help us show His love instead. God can help us choose to be kind and to do what is right. Being kind, especially when others are unkind, and doing what is right are ways we can show God's love.

Closing Prayer

Father, when Jesus was on earth, people were mean to Him, but He always showed them love. I pray that You will help us to show love when others are unkind to us. Help us to resist the temptation to get even with people. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Object Lesson

Don't Explode with Anger

Materials:

- Can of soda

Procedure:

The bible tells us in Romans 12:17 not to repay anyone evil for evil. When someone does something mean to us, our natural reaction is to do something mean back – and even a little more than they did to you!

When we get angry, we need to be very careful not to sin. Sinning is when we do something that goes against God's rules for our life like pushing, fighting, and saying unkind things.

Have you ever been really mad at someone?

(Take out can of soda.)

When we get angry it is like shaking this can of soda up. *(Shake the can hard then act like you are going to open it.)*

What would happen if I opened this can? It would explode everywhere!

(Set the can down and make sure you give it at least a minute or two before picking it up again. It would be best if you test this before presenting it.)

So, if you were angry like this can and you sin by getting in a fight or calling someone bad names it would be like opening this can and it spraying everywhere!

Sometimes what we need to do is walk away and pray and ask God to help us to calm down and not respond in sin.

Ask: What should you do when someone is mean to you? (Pray for the person. Tell the person that he or she is not being kind. Walk away instead of saying something mean. Ignore what that person says. Don't say mean things back. Seek the help of an adult.)

Ask: What are some kind things you can do or say to someone who is mean to you? (Bake them cookies, let them go "first", hold the door open for them, pay them a compliment.)

(Take the can and open it. It should open normally now. Make this dramatic so the kids think it will spray everywhere.)

See, all this can needed was a few moments of quiet and it calmed down and it could be opened without exploding. When we are angry, we often need a few moments so that we can react without sinning.

Game Center

Memory Verse Game

To reinforce the idea that David spent years running and hiding from Saul, print the words of the memory verse on separate index cards, two or three words per card. Hide cards around the room.

Children search for hidden cards and then arrange them in verse order, referring to their Bibles as needed.

I Spy

Lead children in playing a game like *I Spy*. Think of a spot in the room (bookshelf, clock, table) where you pretend David is hiding. Say, "I'm looking for David, and he's somewhere on this side of the room." Children ask "yes" or "no" questions to determine the spot where David is hiding. Once a child guesses the correct location, challenge him or her to answer one of the review questions.

Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. *True or False:* Saul and his 3,000 men tried to capture David. (True.)
2. Where was David hiding? (In a cave.)
3. Why was Saul trying to kill David? (Saul was jealous of David and thought he was a threat to the throne.)
4. *True or False:* When David found Saul alone in a cave, David wanted to attack Saul, but his men told him not to. (False.)
5. What did David's men want David to do to Saul while he was in the cave? (Kill him.)
6. Why didn't David kill Saul? (David respected Saul because God had chosen him to be the first king of Israel.)
7. How did David show Saul he had the opportunity to kill him? (He cut off a piece of Saul's robe.)
8. *True or False:* Saul stopped trying to kill David after the first time David showed kindness to him (False.)
9. When David spared Saul's life, what was Saul's response? (He felt ashamed, verse 17.)
10. *True or False:* David was kind to Saul, even though Saul was unkind to him. (True.)
11. Tell me about a time someone was mean to you? What did you do?
12. Have you ever wanted to get even with someone who was mean to you?
13. What should you do when someone is mean to you? (Pray for the person. Tell the person that he or she is not being kind. Walk away instead of saying something mean. Ignore what that person says. Don't say mean things back. Seek the help of an adult.)
14. What are some kind things you can do or say to someone who is mean to you? (Bake them cookies, let them go "first", hold the door open for them, pay them a compliment.)