The folly of self-exaltation.

The target of Saul's cruel jealous y! “Saul also sent messengers to bring him...” (1 Sam. 19:15). His unsuccessful efforts to slay David intensified his wrath and in verse 20 and 21 we see him sending more messengers, three times, and finally “...then went he also...” to slay David (v. 22). Saul was so determined to slay David that he cast a javelin at HIS OWNSON, Jonathan, to smite him, when he sought to dissuade his father (1 Sam. 20:33). How cruel jealousy is!

Those Faithful to David Also Become the Target of Saul's Persecution

“...if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...” (John 15:20). Frustrated at his lack of success in slaying David, Saul extended his murderousness to his own son and true to David at the jeopardy of their lives. He compounded to his servants:

All of you have conspired against ME, and there is none of you that sheweth ME that my son hath made a league with David against ME. ...Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest...and all the priests. ...And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against ME, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against ME.

Saul was not the adversary, he was the self-exalting Jealousy. Saul also sent messengers to David's house... to slay him... (1 Sam. 31:2). He also “...sent men to spy...” (1 Sam. 19:15). The folly of self-exaltation.

The folly of self-exaltation.

“...THAT HIS BEAR BE NOT LIFTED UP above his brethren...” (Deut. 17:20). These words were instruction for the king, given long before Israel was in the land. How grievously Saul, their first king, failed in this very thing!

Aimelihem, faithful to David, answers the king, and said, “...and who is so faithful among all thy servants as David. ...Saul was also sent to call Ahimelech the priest. ...Saul's hatred and he said: “...and they surely die...” (Deut. 17:20).

Saul took three thousand men out of all Israel, and sought David... (1 Sam. 21:13). Saul went in... Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly... (1 Sam. 21:11). Saul's hatred and he said: “...and they surely die...” (Deut. 17:20).

Saul's hatred and he said: “...and they surely die...” (Deut. 17:20).

What ruthless murder!

Saul's hatred and he said: “...and they surely die...” (Deut. 17:20).

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of rejoicing, “David commanded his young men and they slew them” (2 Sam. 4).

One of the sweetest stories of God’s grace in the Old Testament is that of David’s earnest desire to show God’s kindness to Saul’s grandson Mephibosheth (meaning “a breathing shame”) who was lame on both his feet. David sent and fetched him to him as he was one of the royal family, and David restored all of the land of Saul to him. How faithful was David to the covenant of love made with Jonathan, Mephibosheth’s father! (1 Sam. 18:5; 20:17).

Another of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei,” cursed David, “cast stones at David” and called David a “man of Belial” (meaning “worthlessness”); but instead of resisting or retaliating he meekly submitted to it saying, “So let him curse, because the Lord has said unto him, curse David. . . . It may be that the . . . Lord will requite me good for his cursing” (2 Sam. 16:5-7, 10, 12).

When the news came of the death of his ambitious, rivalrous and rebellious son Absalom, David “was moved and went up to the chamber . . . and wept; and . . . said, O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son” (2 Sam. 18:33; 19:1, 4). Then further on in chapter 19 we see David accepting the repentance of Shimei who had cursed and stoned him --David forgave him and assured him that he would not die (v. 23).

### The Ill Attitude of Jealousy

### Is Ugly, Unjudged Self

“For if we would judge ourselves . . .” (1 Cor. 11:31).

An ill attitude of jealousy in the heart towards another magnifies some little thing while ignoring one’s own malice.

“Self-judgment by grace always tends to promote humility and love.” (Bible Treasury 6:375).

W. Kelly said: “Judge not that ye be not judged” -- refers not to that which is plain, but to what is concealed; to that which, if it does exist, God has not yet laid the evidence before the eyes of His people. We are bound to watch against the spirit of SURMISING evil or IMPUTING MOTIVES (Lectures on Matthew, in loco.).

“Whereby beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matt. 7:3).

The mote, of course, was but little, but it was made a great deal of; and the beam, an enormous thing, was passed by. The Lord is bringing out . . . the danger of a SUSPICIOUS JUDICIAL SPIRIT. And He shows that the way to deal rightly, if we desire the good of His people and their deliverance from evil, IS TO BEGIN WITH SELF-JUDGMENT . . . Let us begin with the grave faults . . . in ourselves; . . . if I begin with this, I shall then see clearly what concerns others; . . .” (W. Kelly, Lectures on Matthew in loco.).

It is clear that unjudged self breeds a SUSPICIOUS JUDICIAL SPIRIT which presumes to judge undisclosed motives. It is this which the Lord condemns in Matt. 7 (and not the commendable judging of evil which we are commanded to do -- e.g., 1 Cor. 5:12, 13).

The discovery of a mote in a brother’s eye . . . ‘Beholdest’ means that it is a continuous thing. It further shows our overlooking all the other praise-worthy features in the brother in order to focus on the smallest spot -- the least speck that is wrong in him, though it can hardly be discerned . . . If I cultivated the habit of self-judgment, instead of being severe with the sin of others, I should . . . consider the beam in my own eye, that is, I should first deal with my own faults with unsparing judgment, and then with my brother’s if necessary in the spirit of meekness . . . Those who are most faulty are too often the least conscious of it, and usually the first to find the speck in another’s eye; whereas those who are perfect should be the first to condemn them. It was not the brother with the mote in his eye that discovered the beam in his brother’s, but he with the beam, although, undoubtedly, the former could see more clearly of the two. May we have grace to mortify our own faults, for if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged . . . The motive must be nothing less than love . . . first cast out the beam out of thine own eye (from Matters of First Importance, by E.V.).

“‘The faultfinder commences not with himself.’

‘Pray for them which despitefully use you.’” (Bible Treasury 6:375).

The Need for Self-judgment in Order to Worship

“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:23, 24). The law took cognizance of . . . [the] extreme form of violence; but our Lord gives length, breadth, height and depth to it: “But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” . . . Our Lord teaches as now coming forth the same category with murder, in the sight of God, every kind of violence, and feeling, and expression; anything of contempt and hatred, whatever expresses the ILL FEELING of the heart . . . the will to annullate others as far as character or influence is concerned . . . He is expanding the law; He is showing now One who looks at and judges the feeling of the heart . . . there might be no very bad effect produced by these words of anger, but they proved the state of the heart. The Lord is in dealing with here. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave it, and go first to thy brother, and then go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (W. Kelly, Lectures on Matthew, in loco.).

To refuse to be reconciled is to be implacable. “Stubbornness is as iniquity” (1 Sam. 15:23) was said of King Saul. Often brother has been separated in heart and spirit from brother, while the outward form of fellowship has been well kept! In some instances brethren have “preached at” and “prayed at” another in the meeting, only to widen the breach . . . “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (Jas. 3:16).

First be reconciled to thy brother. How ever repugnant to flesh and blood, or humbling to our natural pride, our own feelings must be laid aside with “all malice and all guile and hypocrisy, and envy, and all evil speakings.” We must by the grace of God conquer the greater difficulty -- the flesh in ourselves (from Matters of First Importance, by E.V.).

~A.C. Brown, 1972

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**“Saul Eyed David”**

These words are taken from the narrative in 1 Sam. 18:9. They describe the attitude of Saul toward David, an attitude of bitter hatred. We need to be constantly on guard against allowing the flesh in us to develop a spirit of jealousy toward our brother lest we find that we like Saul are “eye ing” someone with a view to promoting his downfall.

Saul had advantages not a few.

There was none like him. He was the people’s choice, higher, older, -- God’s anointed king over the nation. He had even prophesied. Samuel (who had God’s mind) had faithfully warned Israel of his character; that he would grasp everything “in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other above himself,” “He will take your sons, daughters, fields, vineyards, oliveyards, seed, servants, and assés. To be honored before others was his chief ambition (1 Sam. 15:30). Contrary to the spirit of . . . in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves; regarding not each his own [qualities] but each those of others also” (Phil. 2:3, JND); “. . . as to honor, each taking the lead in paying it to the other” (Rom. 12:10, JND).

God had in mind one after His own heart -- David, the beloved, the shepherd and sweet psalmist, whose harp was used in the court of the king to soothe and charm Saul’s disturbed spirit.

### The Cause of Saul’s Bitterness Toward David


The youth David meets Goliath, the giant and champion of the Philistines, who had defied “the armies of the living God” in the valley of Elah, and slays him with a smooth stone, winning a great victory. When David returned with the head of Goliath in his hand, King Saul’s son Jonathan fell in love with David. Saul beheld how David’s wise behavior “was accepted in the sight of all the people. Women sang with joy saying, ‘Saul hath slain his thou sands, and David his ten thousands.’” From then on, SAUL EYED DAVID (1 Sam. 18:9). It was malicious jealousy. No doubt he was thankful enough for the deliverance from Goliath’s Geth. His now his resentment for David increased. He could not stand that the people recognize David’s superiority and thus honor him above himself, his king. Such is the flesh in every one of us, and it crops out to our shame, dishonors the Lord, and causes no end of trouble.