



## **Respect Lesson**

### **1 Samuel 24:8-10**

Have you ever had a hard time respecting someone in authority over you? I can remember a teacher that I had in high school that I felt had not "earned" my respect. He was short-tempered, rude, and often showed dislike toward my friends and I. One day, he lost his temper and yelled at me in front of my classmates even though I did nothing wrong. I was so angry that I just snapped. I treated him exactly how I felt he should be treated - by yelling back and saying some very hurtful things. Later, I found myself sitting in the principal's office. She agreed that the teacher was out of line, but it did not excuse my actions. I walked away confused. How could I respect someone who was always acting wrongly? Do I even need to?

### **David and King Saul**

Before we read a passage from 1 Samuel, let me give you some backstory. God never intended for Israel to have a king, but after they begged for one, He relented. King Saul was chosen by God to lead His people. Things did not end up going so well. Eventually God appointed Saul's replacement—a shepherd boy named David. It would be many years before David became king. In that time, Saul went from David's caregiver to trying to murder him. David was forced to live a rough life on the run from his king. One day, Saul enters a cave not knowing that David is hiding in the dark. David finally has a chance to kill Saul and take his place as King of Israel. His friends urge him to go through with it. David does not. Let's read why he spares Saul's life.

### **1 Samuel 24:8-10**

David came out and shouted after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him. Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? This very day you can see with your own eyes it is not true. For the Lord placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the Lord's anointed one. (New Living Translation)

To this point, Saul had definitely not "earned" David's respect. He had lied to him and tried to murder him. Basically, Saul's chief ambition in life seemed to be making David miserable even though David had never done anything wrong to him. But look how David responds to Saul. First, he bows before him, showing him the respect a king deserved. Second, he explains that he will never harm the king because "he is the Lord's anointed one." As difficult as it must have been for David, he realized that by

showing Saul the respect a king deserves, he was actually showing God respect. Saul was God's chosen king. David realized that it was God's choice when and how to remove him.

When I think back to how I treated that teacher I realize what my principal was trying to teach me. There are times in life when those in authority over me will make mistakes. Does that mean I do not have to respect them? No. God is in control. He has the power to place people in authority and also to remove them. By showing restraint and respect, I am honoring God and trusting in His power. It is no wonder that David was so incredibly close to God. He understood that respect is not earned but is required. Following Jesus requires a tremendous amount of humility. More than anything it requires faith that God will always support and defend us in His timing.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Do feel that there is a point that we no longer need to show respect to an authority figure? Why/why not?
- Why is it so hard to show respect to an authority figure that has not "earned" it?
- Is it possible to show respect while standing up for myself? How so?
- Learning from David's example, how should I have responded to the teacher in my story?
- After I realized I had reacted wrongly toward my teacher, what should my next steps have been?