

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

2nd Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 17

Gentleness and Self-Control

Gentleness and Self-Control

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

These are the books of the Bible we will be memorizing. New books for this month are in bold. If a student can memorize all the books up to this month’s books, you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective This lesson will use David’s example in **1 Samuel 24** to teach on gentleness and self-control, with and emphasis on self-control.

Key Verses

Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Samuel 24—Main Teaching Passages
Jeremiah 17:9

Books to Memorize

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, **Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah**

Hook

Before class, play “the Quiet Game.” The rules are simple: the students must be silent. If they talk or giggle, they are out. The last person left wins. Try to get them to talk by asking questions or telling jokes.

At the end of the game, explain that the winner won because they showed self-control. They may have wanted to talk as much as everyone else, but they controlled that desire and remained quiet. Today we will learn about gentleness and self-control.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

The final two Fruits of the Spirit are gentleness and self-control. Gentleness means that we have control over the way we act toward others so that we are kind and humble, not aggressive or violent. Self-control is the ability to keep yourself from giving in to the desires and temptations that come into your head. In 1 Samuel 24, we read an incredible story of David exercising both gentleness and self-control.

David had been on the run from King Saul for a long time. This is because the prophet Samuel said that the kingdom of Israel would be taken from Saul and given to David. In 1 Samuel 24, we find that David had run to a place called En-Gedi, but Saul had discovered he was there and came after him. David and his men were hiding in a cave, and as Saul was looking, he took a break and entered that same cave all by himself.

When David's men saw this, they thought that surely God had given David a chance to get rid of his enemy, but David knew in his heart that killing Saul was the wrong thing to do. Instead, he cut off a corner of Saul's robe, but even this made David feel guilty, and so he followed Saul out of the cave. David called out to Saul and asked why he was chasing him. David showed him the piece of the robe he cut off as proof that he could have harmed Saul, but didn't. Saul wept when he heard this and confessed that David was more righteous than him, and after making David swear not to destroy his family, he let David go.

LOOK

Imagine what must have been going through David's mind when Saul entered that cave. Here was a man who was causing him so many problems, and now he had no guards, no defense, and was not even aware that David was there. It would have been so easy for him to take Saul out and end all his worries. Not to mention, of all the caves Saul could have entered, he came in the same cave as David. As David's men stated in vs. 4, it must have seemed like God was rewarding him for his faithfulness by giving him a chance to kill Saul. Most people in David's situation would not have turned down the opportunity to get rid of their enemy in order to protect themselves. But David resisted this temptation, showing incredible gentleness and self-control.

David showed gentleness and self-control by saying no to his desire to protect himself by harming Saul, even if it put his own life in danger. As humans, we have all sorts of desires, or things that we want. Some of them are good. Our desire for food and water keeps us alive. Others are neutral. It's fine to want to go outside, play a game, or get something nice

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

for our birthday. But then sometimes the things we want are bad or sinful. When you want to call out in class, hit someone who made you mad, or make fun of someone, you are being tempted to sin. Having self-control means being able to say no to these desires when they come into your mind.

Because all humans are sinful, self-control doesn't come naturally to us. In fact, Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that our hearts are wicked and deceitful, constantly trying to lead us into sin. Every day, we face many temptations. Today, you might be tempted to call out in class, disobey your parents, act crazy when you are supposed to be quiet, be disrespectful, or say something unkind to others. While we may sometimes make the right decision, on our own it is impossible to always show gentleness and self-control. That's why they are Fruits of the *Spirit*. We need to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us control ourselves and be gentle whenever we are tempted to sin. When the Holy Spirit is alive and active in our lives, we will be able to resist temptation and say no to sin. That doesn't mean we will be perfect all the time, but as long as we are obeying Christ and living in the Spirit, we will be able to have gentleness and self-control.

TOOK

As a class, review the books of the Bible Genesis-Job.

Review the lesson by asking the students what gentleness and self-control are. How did David show these things in 1 Samuel 24?

Pray: Thank the Lord for giving us His Holy Spirit so that we can have gentleness and self-control. Ask Him to help us to say no to temptations.

Parent Question: What are some situations where I need to use self-control?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Galatians 5:23 and 1 Samuel 24 by David Guzik

5. ([Gal 5:22-23](#)) Examples of the fruit of the Spirit that walking in the Spirit produces in our lives.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

i. **The fruit of the Spirit is... gentleness:** The word has the idea of being teachable, not having a superior attitude, not demanding one's rights. It isn't timidity or passiveness; "It is the quality of the man who is always angry at the right time and never at the wrong time." (Barclay)

i. Morris on **gentleness:** "It is important for the Christian to see that the self-assertiveness that is so much part of the twentieth-century life should not be valued highly. It is much better that each of us curtails the desire to be pre-eminent and exercises a proper meekness (or gentleness)."

j. **The fruit of the Spirit is... self-control:** The world knows something of **self-control**, but almost always for a selfish reason. It knows the self-discipline and denial someone will go through for *themselves*, but the *self-control of the Spirit* will also work on behalf of others.

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

A. David doesn't kill Saul when he has the opportunity.

1. ([1Sa 24:1-2](#)) Saul seeks David in the Wilderness of En Gedi.

Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

a. **When Saul had returned from following the Philistines:** In the previous chapter, God miraculously delivered David by drawing Saul away to fight the Philistines at the moment Saul was ready to capture David. But when Saul was done with the Philistines, he went back to pursuing David.

i. We often wish that our next victory would be a *permanent* victory. We wish that the spiritual enemies who pursue us like Saul pursued David would simply give up, and we wouldn't have to bother with them any more. But even when we have victory and they are sent away, they come back, and will keep coming back until we go to glory with the Lord. That is the only *permanent* victory we will find.

b. **The Wilderness of En Gedi:** The **En Gedi** canyon runs westward from the Dead Sea. One can still see the good sized creek flowing down the canyon, making **En Gedi**, with its waterfalls and vegetation seem more like a tropical paradise than the middle of the desert.

i. One can also see the numerous *caves* dotting the hills. This was a great place for David and his men to hide out. In the middle of barren desert, scouts could easily detect approaching troops. There was plenty of water and wildlife and many caves and defensive positions.

2. (1Sa 24:3) Saul unknowingly comes to a cave where David and his men are hiding.

So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)

a. **The sheepfolds:** This indicates that this was a large cave, big enough to shelter a flock of sheep. All or most of David's 600 men could hide in the recesses of the cave.

b. **Saul went in to attend to his needs:** Since the Bible is a real book, dealing with real people living real lives, we aren't surprised to see it describe Saul's attention to his personal needs. But something as basic and common as this was timed and arranged by God, without Saul having any knowledge of God's timing or arrangement of things.

i. The fact that Saul **went in to attend to his needs** also meant that he went into the cave *alone*. His soldiers and bodyguards were out of the cave waiting for him.

c. **David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave:** What are the chances? Saul must attend to his personal needs at the very moment he passes by the very cave where David hides. This was no coincidence but arranged by God to test David, to train David, and display David's godly heart.

3. (1Sa 24:4-7) David restrains himself and his men from killing Saul.

Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. And he said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.

a. **The men of David said to him:** David's men were excited at the opportunity and believed it was a gift from God. They knew it was no coincidence that Saul came alone into that cave at that moment. They thought this was an opportunity from God to kill Saul.

i. Apparently, on some previous occasion God promised David, "**Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.**" They believed that this was the fulfillment of the promise and that David needed to seize the promise by faith and by the sword.

b. **David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe:** We can imagine David listening to this counsel from his men and with his sword creeping quickly towards Saul, covered by the darkness of the cave. David's men are excited; their lives as fugitives are about to end, and they will soon be installed as friends and associates of the new King of Israel. But as David came close to Saul and put forth his sword he didn't bring it crashing down on Saul's neck or thrust it through his back. Instead he **secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe**.

i. Some wonder how David could have done this without being detected. Saul may have laid his robe down in one part of the cave, and attended to his needs in another part, so David did not have to get right next to Saul to cut off a corner of his robe. Or, it may also be that there was enough noise and commotion from the thousands of men outside of the cave along with their horses that David was simply undetectable.

ii. David decided to spare Saul because he knew that God's promise said, "You will inherit the throne of Israel." He knew that Saul was in the way of that promise. But he also knew it was disobedient of him to kill Saul, because God put Saul in a position of authority and it was *God's* job to take care of Saul not David's. David wanted the promise to be fulfilled but he *refused to try and fulfill God's promise through his own disobedience*.

iii. Sometimes when we have a promise from God we think we are justified in sinning to pursue that promise. This is *always wrong*. God will fulfill His promises, but He will do it *His way*, and do it *righteously*. Instead, we need to be like Abraham, who obeyed God even when it seemed to be at the expense of God's promise, willing to sacrifice the son of promise ([Genesis 22](#)). Even more, we need to be like Jesus, who didn't take Satan's offer to "win back the world" at the expense of obedience ([Luke 4:5-8](#)).

iv. In all this, we see that David knew not only how to wait *on* the Lord, but he also knew how to wait *for* the Lord. "We wait *on* the Lord by prayer and supplication, looking for the indication of his will; we wait *for* the Lord by patience and submission, looking for the interposition of his hand." (Meyer) David was determined that when he sat on the throne of Israel it wouldn't be because *he* got Saul out of the way but because *God* got Saul out of the way. He wanted God's fingerprints on that work, not his own, and he wanted the clean conscience that comes from knowing it was God's work.

v. We also see that David's heart didn't store up bitterness and anger towards Saul. Even as Saul made David's life completely miserable, David kept taking it to the Lord, and he received the cleansing from the hurt and the bitterness and the anger that the Lord can give. If David stored up bitterness and anger towards Saul he probably wouldn't have been able to resist the temptation to kill him at what seemed to be a "risk free" opportunity.

c. **David's heart troubled him:** This is a remarkably tender conscience in David. Many would only be troubled that they did not take the opportunity to kill Saul. David only cut off the corner of Saul's robe, yet his **heart troubled him**. Why? Because the robe was a symbol of Saul's royal authority, and David felt bad – rightly so, according to the heart of God – that he had done *anything* against Saul's God appointed authority.

i. David expresses this when he said, "**The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed... seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.**" David knew better than anyone that Saul was a troubled and corrupt leader, yet it was in God's power to take him away and David wouldn't do what was only the Lord's to do.

ii. "It was a trifling matter, and yet it seemed dishonouring to God's anointed king; and as such it hurt David to have done it. We sometimes in conversation and criticism cut off a piece of a man's character, or influence for good, or standing in the esteem of others. Ought not our heart to smite us for such thoughtless conduct? Ought we not to make confession and reparation?" (Meyer)

d. **So David restrained his servants with these words:** David not only kept himself from taking vengeance upon Saul, he also **restrained his servants**. Many men in the same situation, would say, "Well, I won't kill Saul now, but if one of my servants does, what can I do?" and therefore leave the door wide open for Saul to be killed. But David wouldn't do that, and he **restrained his servants**.

i. **With these words:** These were the words of a humble, tender conscience before God. They were the words of a man who was convicted at merely cutting off a corner of Saul's robe. When David's servants saw his godliness and how he wanted to please God in *everything*, their hearts were **restrained** from doing any evil against Saul.

B. David appeals to Saul.

1. ([1Sa 24:8](#)) David reveals his presence to Saul.

David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down.

a. **David... went out of the cave:** David took a big chance here, because he could simply remain in hiding, secure in the fact that Saul had not found him. But he surrendered himself to Saul because he saw the opportuni-

ty to show Saul his heart towards him and reconcile.

b. **My lord the king... David stooped with his face to the earth and bowed twice:** This was great submission to Saul. We might think that David had the right to come to Saul as an *equal*. “Well Saul, we’ve both been anointed to be king. You’ve got the throne right now, but I’ll have it some day and you know it. So from one anointed man to another, look at how I just spared your life.” That wasn’t David’s attitude at all. Instead he said: “Saul, you are the boss and I know it. I respect your place as my leader and as my king.”

i. When **David stooped with his face to the earth and bowed twice** he also showed great trust in God, because he made himself completely vulnerable to Saul. Saul could have killed him very easily at that moment, but David trusted that if he did what was right before God then God would protect him and fulfill the promise.

2. ([1Sa 24:9-15](#)) David’s speech to Saul.

And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks your harm’? Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed.’ Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. Let the Lord judge between you and me, and let the Lord avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.’ But my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? Therefore let the Lord be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand.”

a. **Why do you listen to the words of men:** David showed great kindness and tact to Saul. David knew very well that Saul’s fear of David came from Saul himself and not from anyone else. But David put the blame on nameless others so that it was easier for Saul to say, “They were wrong” instead of “I was wrong.” Even in confrontation, David covers Saul’s sin.

i. “He prudently and modestly translates the fault from Saul to his followers and evil counselors.” (Poole)

ii. Some might have said, “David, lay it on the line! Tell it like it is!” and David will, to some extent. But even as he does he will show mercy and kindness to Saul. David will fulfill [Proverbs 10:12](#): *Love covers all sins*, and [1 Peter 4:8](#): *Love will cover a multitude of sins*.

b. **I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed:** This principle of not striking out against God’s anointed leaders is good and important but sometimes has been misused.

i. The phrase *touch not the Lord’s anointed* is in vogue among some Christians and among many leaders. Often to them it means: “You should never speak against a pastor or a leader. He is above your criticism or rebuke, so just keep quiet.” Sometimes it is used even to prevent a Biblical evaluation of teaching. But when David recognized that Saul was **the Lord’s anointed** and refused to harm him, what David would not do is *kill* Saul. He did humbly confront Saul with his sin, hoping Saul would change his heart. But it is entirely wrong for people to use the idea of *touch not the Lord’s anointed* to insulate a leader from all evaluation or accountability.

c. **See the corner of your robe in my hand:** This was proof that David had full opportunity to kill Saul but did not take that opportunity. As David showed Saul the **corner of his robe**, Saul must have heard the Spirit of God speaking loudly in his heart.

i. Through this cut robe, God sent a message to Saul. The robe was a picture of Saul’s royal authority, and through this God said, “I am cutting away your royal authority.”

ii. In 1 Samuel 15:27-28 the prophet Samuel rebuked Saul for his hard-hearted disobedience to God. In his distress, Saul tried to keep Samuel from leaving, and grabbed his robe, and a portion of the prophet's robe tore away. When Saul was left holding the torn piece of Samuel's robe, Samuel said to him: *The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.* Now, when David confronts Saul with the torn robe, Saul *must* be reminded of this incident, and God's message to him was loud and clear.

d. **Let the Lord judge between you and me:** David didn't need to do anything more to defend himself before Saul; he referred the matter to the Lord. David would let God plead his case and be his judge. David didn't just say, **"My hand shall not be against you,"** he *proved* it by not killing Saul when he had the opportunity.

i. The Living Bible gives a good sense of [1 Samuel 24:12](#): *Perhaps the Lord will kill you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you.* In fact, David *protected* Saul by restraining his men.

ii. It was inevitable that Saul would be judged, and that he would lose the throne. But it was absolutely God's business to accomplish that and it was the business of no one else. Jesus established the same principle in [Matthew 18:7](#) when He said, *offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!* God's judgment is *God's* business. We put ourselves in a bad place when we make ourselves instruments of God's judgment.

e. **Wickedness proceeds from the wicked:** David used this proverb to make a point. "Saul, if I was really as wicked as your advisors say I am, if I really was out to kill you, I would have done that wicked act in the cave. Because no wickedness proceeded from me when I had the opportunity, it shows my heart is not wicked towards you."

f. **Therefore let the Lord be judge... and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand:** David told Saul, "I'm still trusting God, that He will deliver me out of your hand." Instead of finding a way out of his trial in the flesh, David did the harder thing – he trusted in God to deliver him instead of trusting in himself.

C. Saul's reaction to David.

1. ([1Sa 24:16-19](#)) Saul honors David's mercy towards him.

So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. Then he said to David: "You *are* more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the Lord delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day."

a. **Is this your voice, my son David?** Saul responded so emotionally because Saul lived on the delusion that David was out to get him, and David's refusal to kill Saul when he had the chance proved beyond doubt that this was false. David's *obedience to God* and his *love to Saul* made all the difference in softening Saul's heart.

b. **You are more righteous than I... you have dealt well with me... you did not kill me... the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day:** This was a dramatic change of heart in Saul. Every change David could have hoped for in Saul has happened, and Saul really seemed sincere about it (**Saul lifted up his voice and wept**). David heaped coals of kindness upon Saul's head and it melted Saul's heart.

2. ([1Sa 24:20-22](#)) Saul looks to the future.

"And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. Therefore swear now to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants

after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

a. **I know indeed that you shall surely be king:** Saul knew it all along ([1 Samuel 23:17](#)) but now he *really* knows it.

b. **Therefore swear to me know by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me:** Saul simply wanted the same kind of promise from David that he made to Jonathan in [1 Samuel 20:13-16](#). In that day, when one royal house replaced another it was common for the new royal house to kill all the potential rulers from the old royal house. Saul knew that one day, David and his descendants would rule over Israel, and he wants David to promise that David and his descendants will not kill or mistreat the descendants of Saul.

i. "How then could David destroy so many of Saul's sons, [2 Samuel 21:8-9](#)? David could bind himself by his oaths, but he could not bind God, to whose good pleasure all promises, vows, and oaths must in all reason be submitted; and that was done by God's command, and God was well pleased with it, [2 Samuel 21:14](#)." (Poole)

c. **And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold:** David didn't go back home with Saul and be restored to his home and his place at the palace because David knew that as much as Saul meant it at the moment, the struggle would be to *remain* in the place of victory.

i. Many times, a person repents and claims to recognize their sinful ways just like Saul did. But the validity of repentance and a changed heart isn't demonstrated by the emotion or sincerity of a moment. It is demonstrated by the ongoing direction of one's life and David had every right to say, "I'm going to stay in the stronghold until I see the direction of Saul's life."

ii. "What a miserable picture Saul is! What is the use of saying, 'I have played the fool,' if he goes on playing the fool? What use are his tears and confession before David if he doesn't act upon his remorse?" (Redpath)

iii. In fact, it is *worse* to have this kind of emotional response if it *doesn't* result in true repentance. "If a man is emotionally upset, as Saul was, and awakens to his condition, but only weeps about it and still doesn't obey God, his second state is a thousand times worse than the first. Emotion that does not lead to action only leads deeper into sin and rebellion." (Redpath)