



## **Studies in the Life of David**

Text

First Samuel 30:1-31

Topic

After traveling about 100 miles round trip, David's men talk of stoning him to death when they return home to find Ziklag burning and their families taken captive

Title

*"How to Avoid Becoming Zik-lagged in Your Travels"*

Introduction

If you are ever sick or injured the words you want to hear from your physician are, "You're going to make a full and complete recovery!"

There are times in your walk with the Lord when you misstep. You find yourself off of the path, out in the world, not in the will of God. Can you hope to make a full and complete recovery?

David is our example. He mis-stepped. Rather than endure his trials he had fled to enemy territory and befriended the world. He was a hairsbreadth away from having to fight with the Philistines against his own countrymen.

God stepped-in and recovered David. He brought David to a place where we read (v6) "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." After recovering David, God instructed him to go out and (v8) "recover all" that he had lost during the time he had been away from the Lord.

*I like that!* God took steps to recover David and then instructed him about how to recover all he had forfeited.

Since God is no respecter of persons, we can be confident that if He did that for David He *can* and *will* do it for us.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 When You Misstep In Your Christian Walk The Lord Takes Steps To Recover You, and #2 After A Misstep In Your Christian Walk You Take The Steps To Recover All.

#1 When You Misstep In Your Christian Walk  
The Lord Takes Steps To Recover You  
(v1-6)

This particular episode in David's life seemed to have a happy ending in chapter twenty-nine when the Philistine lords determined to send David home to Ziklag rather than risk having him turn against them in the battle against Israel. It must have been a great relief for David and his men.

Having traveled some fifty miles to the muster, they got up early the next morning to travel the fifty miles back. Seems it took about three days. Anxious to return home, tired from travel, there was no happy ending awaiting their return. From some distance away they would see smoke rising and pick up their pace worried what had happened.

1 Samuel 30:1 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire,

1 Samuel 30:2 and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way.

1 Samuel 30:3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

David had left Ziklag completely defenseless. He was a great military strategist and therefore knew better. He put all those he loved at risk. It devastated his family and the families of all those associated with him.

Our missteps out of the will of God don't just affect us. When we wander out of the will of God we put others at risk. We are part of their spiritual

defense and help. When we're not on our watch, the enemy comes in against them, too.

1 Samuel 30:4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

1 Samuel 30:5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive.

It's true of backsliding that you don't know what you've got til it's gone. Some of you have shed tears like this when your world came crashing down on account of your sin. You may have lost your family over it. It's devastating.

1 Samuel 30:6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

Things got worse and worser for David! And then, just like that, in a moment of spiritual clarity, the tide turned as "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God."

How did he strengthen himself? It seems to be nothing more but nothing less than a return in his mind and heart to submission to God and to the understanding that the Lord is sufficient *in* all things and *for* all things.

David is going to literally "recover all" that was taken from he and his men. I want to honestly tell you that you might not always be able to "recover all" in your recovery. Marriages do fail; families do fall apart. Careers are ruined.

What we are seeing in David is what God does, what He can do. He works to recover you and He can help you "recover all." But He still respects free will. Those who were left defenseless, who were devastated - your family, for instance - must also "strengthen themselves in the Lord." God cannot force them to be part of your recovery.

If you're walking away from God, out of the will of God, let Him recover you right now before any more damage is done to those you truly love.

Having ruined your life with your missteps, the first step back is to the Lord. Whatever happens next you can walk in forgiveness and in the power of His Holy Spirit.

In other words, you return to the Lord not to get something but to be with Someone, to be with Him. He will walk with you through the aftermath seeking to “recover all.”

## #2 After A Misstep In Your Christian Walk You Take The Steps To Recover All (v7-31)

As David acts to recover all that was lost we will see some spiritual ‘steps’ we can and should take everyday in our walk with the Lord. Whether we have just returned from a misstep or have been walking circumspectly with the Lord, these are things we ought to be doing as we journey home toward Heaven.

1 Samuel 30:7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

1 Samuel 30:8 So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

The ephod was a portion of the high priest's garments which speaks of prayer. This garment went over the garment that the regular priest wore. The ephod set the high priest apart. It was the garment he wore when he went into the golden altar of prayer. It had two stones, one on each shoulder, on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on one shoulder and six on the other. In other words, the high priest came to the altar of prayer bearing Israel on his shoulders.

We read this and commend David for going immediately to prayer. But let's notice something a little deeper. David's inquiry was, “Shall I pursue this troop?” Would that have been your prayer? ***It would not have been mine!*** I would have prayed, “God give me the strength to overtake this troop and recover all that was lost.”

The very words David spoke showed his attitude in prayer. It was one of total and complete submission to the will of God. God could have said, "No!" and I think David was at a place where he would have received it and told his army that all was lost but Praise the Lord!

A first 'step' on the daily road for those of us who are recovered is not just to pray but to be submitted wholly to God's will. Then we can pray as we ought to, seeking Him for strength to accomplish His will on earth.

1 Samuel 30:9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind.

1 Samuel 30:10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.

These two hundred men will become prominent at the end of the chapter and we'll talk about them then.

1 Samuel 30:11 Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water.

1 Samuel 30:12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights.

1 Samuel 30:13 Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick.

1 Samuel 30:14 We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

1 Samuel 30:15 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?" So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop."

Even though they were days behind in their pursuit of the Amalekites, and their families were in trouble, they stopped to help this young man. Sure, he had information for them; but they could have gotten it out of him some other way. Would Jack Bauer have fed and refreshed this guy?

Compassion is the word I'd use to describe David's actions. Though focused on his mission to recover all that had been taken, he did not ignore

those he encountered along the way. He treated this young man with compassion.

Every 'step' along our daily road is to be measured with the compassion of Jesus Christ.

1 Samuel 30:16 And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.

1 Samuel 30:17 Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.

1 Samuel 30:18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives.

1 Samuel 30:19 And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all.

1 Samuel 30:20 Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."

Imagine how very tired David and his men must have been. This all started with them having marched from and to Ziklag one hundred miles round trip. Then they had suffered from extreme emotion at Ziklag. That kind of mental pain is physically exhausting. Some of the men had been so exhausted that they had to be left behind along the way. Now, having come upon the enemy, they fought them hand-to-hand "from twilight until the evening of the next day."

We must be relentless in pursuing and destroying spiritual strongholds and enemies. Just as David fought them for a full 24-hours, so our fight is 24/7 everyday.

Some of them escaped on camels to fight another day. Our fight won't be over until we are with the Lord.

1 Samuel 30:21 Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them.

1 Samuel 30:22 Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the

spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart."

1 Samuel 30:23 But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the Lord has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us.

1 Samuel 30:24 For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike."

1 Samuel 30:25 So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

Two hundred men stayed behind. Notice that David had given them a task - to stay by the supplies. They guarded the supplies, kept them safe.

These verses are worthy of a whole separate study. For one thing, they are a tremendous encouragement to all those who are called upon to function in a church in a support capacity. We have a team of ten men in Eureka. They are there, street witnessing, in the rescue mission, among the homeless, involved in hand-to-hand spiritual warfare. Did you pray for them? Maybe you skipped a meal, fasting to pray for them. Maybe the Lord put it on your heart to give something towards the trip. No, we didn't ask and aren't asking, but should we have to? Obviously it costs something to go up there, to fill up the tank and to eat along the way.

To the extent you and I supported them, we guarded the supplies and thus we share equally in their work and reward. God credits us as if we were there with them.

Support is crucial - whether its through prayer or giving or fasting. It is an important 'step' in your daily walk with the Lord. You're either called to go or to support. Either one requires a real sacrifice of time, talent and treasure.

1 Samuel 30:26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord" -

1 Samuel 30:27 to those who were in Bethel, those who were in Ramoth of the South, those who were in Jattir,

1 Samuel 30:28 those who were in Aroer, those who were in Siphmoth, those who were in Eshtemoa,

1 Samuel 30:29 those who were in Rachal, those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, those who were in the cities of the Kenites,  
1 Samuel 30:30 those who were in Hormah, those who were in Chorashan, those who were in Athach,  
1 Samuel 30:31 those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

This was a smart move diplomatically. David had been in Philistine territory for quite a while. He needed to let the citizens of Israel know he was still one of them, still on track to be their king once God removed Saul.

There's also a great illustration for us in David's actions. We would say that David gave gifts to men. It reminds me of the verses in Ephesians chapter four that say Jesus has given gifted men to the church and given gifts to the men and women of the church. We are then called upon to exercise those gifts in ways that build-up other believers.

Are you aware of the gifts available to you? You can read about them, see them listed that is, in First Corinthians twelve, in Ephesians four, and in Romans twelve. Then you can discover them being properly used by Jesus in the Gospels and by the apostles and believers in the Book of Acts and in the rest of the New Testament.

Most important is that you gather with other believers under the authority of Jesus in a local church and exercise your gifts to build others up. You will discover your gifting around others in the church.

Whether you are recovered by God from a misstep or you want to walk with Him to avoid missteps, these are some of the 'steps' to take everyday:

- Submit yourself to God, *then* pray and follow His leading.
- Maintain the compassion of Christ towards everyone you encounter by looking upon them as eternal beings for whom Jesus died.
- Never relax in the fight against spiritual enemies.
- Be sure that you are either going forth to minister or are supporting those who are. Either way you are called upon to be a living sacrifice by praying, fasting, and giving.



- Be part of a church and gather with it to discover and exercise the gifts God has chosen to give you to minister to one another.

For some of you the place to start might be to get off the broad path that leads to destruction and onto the narrow one leading to Heaven. In other words, you may not be saved; you may need to ask the Lord to forgive you your sins and declare you righteous by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

