

# FOR US AND AGAINST US

*“As they danced they sang, ‘Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands.’ Saul was very angry, this refrain galled him.... From that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.”*  
—1 SAMUEL 18:7-9

In the valley of Elah, Israel had gained victory over the Philistines, a victory God had given them because of David’s courage and faith in Him. Subsequently, two things happened to David, which often happens when we are accomplishing the work of God.

The first is that after David had stepped out in obedience and God gave him the victory, people joined him. 1 Samuel 17:51-52 says, “When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines...” Sometimes we need to be the catalysts in setting the work of God in motion. Others may be on the sidelines and long to experience the work of God, but lack the courage. When they see that courage in someone else, they’re motivated to join in the work.

The second occurrence was that someone hated David for it. What happens when a man who should trust God and doesn’t, and another man comes along who does trust God and accomplishes the task? Is the other man delighted? As is often the case, he is not. When people started praising David, Saul became very angry and jealous. David had trusted God, received the victory, and Saul hated him for it. From then on, much of Saul’s time, energy and manpower were spent in hunting David down to have him killed.

When a person is living in the flesh by human effort who knows better, and someone else comes along, living by the Spirit, you can be absolutely sure those living by the flesh will resent those living by the Spirit. David spent the remaining years of Saul's life as a fugitive on the run. But God was with him. Hiding out in caves and hillsides, he was joined by a band of misfits and became their leader. During this period, he wrote many of the Psalms that are of great inspiration to us today. When Saul died, David succeeded him as Israel's king, and became known as the man after God's own heart.

When we're on God's agenda we can anticipate that not everyone will like it, much less applaud it, especially those who know better. They're the ones who will be our biggest antagonists. It happened throughout Scripture and again and again throughout history. But in living by the Spirit, we will certainly experience what David writes, "My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart" (Psalm 7:10).

***PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant me your strength in standing firm against any opposition I may encounter in your work, and help me to always abide in You. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I fully supportive and encouraging of others in their desire to accomplish God's work?***