

Heart Check

When Someone Else Gets the Blessing

1 Samuel 18

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Introduction

In 2024, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt published a book called *The Anxious Generation*. His findings were alarming. After more than a decade of stability or improvement, the mental health of adolescents plunged in the early 2010s. Rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide rose sharply—more than doubling on many measures.

Why? What happened in the early 2010s?

The smartphone arrived. And with it came what Haidt calls the "phone-based childhood."

TikTok and Instagram have turned comparison into an Olympic sport for an entire generation. The average teenager now sees hundreds of curated highlight reels every day. Haidt documents more than a dozen mechanisms by which this "great rewiring of childhood" has interfered with children's development—everything from sleep deprivation to attention fragmentation, addiction, loneliness, and what he calls "social comparison and perfectionism."

Social comparison. That's the clinical term for what happens when you scroll through your feed and see your classmate's perfect vacation, your ex's new relationship, your friend's acceptance letter to the school that rejected you.

And here's the thing: it's not just teenagers.

You're scrolling through Instagram on a Sunday afternoon. Maybe you shouldn't be—but you are. And there it is. Your college roommate just posted pictures of their dream vacation. The one you've been saving for. The one you can't afford because the car broke down and the medical bills stacked up and life just keeps happening.

You double-tap. You leave a nice comment. "So happy for you! Looks amazing!"

But something else is happening inside you. Something you'd never post about. Something hot and uncomfortable that you'd rather not name.

Or maybe it's not Instagram. Maybe it's the baby shower you attended last week—your third one this year—while you've been trying for five years and the nursery in your house is still empty.

Maybe it's the colleague who got the promotion you'd been working toward. The one who started two years after you did.

Maybe it's the church down the street whose parking lot is overflowing while yours has plenty of empty spaces.

Maybe it's your sibling whose kids seem to be thriving while yours are struggling.

We've all been there. Life is full of triumphs and troubles for everyone. But what happens when you're the one stuck in the troubles while watching someone else enjoy all the triumphs?

What does that reveal about your heart?

Today we're going to look at a passage of Scripture where one man's God-given success becomes a mirror—a mirror that exposes the hearts of everyone around him. Some respond with joy and sacrificial love. Others respond with jealousy and murderous rage.

Same circumstances. Radically different hearts.

And here's the question I want us to sit with this morning: *What does our response to another's God-given success reveal about us?*

Open your Bibles to 1 Samuel 18. Let's watch two men encounter the same blessing—and see what their responses exposed about their hearts.

Movement #1: God's Blessing on Others Exposes Our Hearts

To understand what happens in chapter 18, you need to know what just happened in chapter 17. A young shepherd boy named David—unknown, overlooked, the youngest of eight brothers—has just done the impossible. He's killed Goliath.

You know the story. The nine-foot Philistine champion who had terrified Israel's entire army for forty days. The giant that King Saul and all his trained soldiers were too afraid to face. David—with a sling and five smooth stones and an unshakeable confidence in God—took him down with a single shot.

And now David returns from battle. And all Israel is watching. Everyone who encounters David's God-given success has to respond somehow.

I. Jonathan Saw David's Success and Responded with Devotion (vv. 1-4)

Look at verse 1:

"As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

Now, you need to understand who Jonathan is. He's the crown prince. He's Saul's eldest son. He's the heir apparent to the throne of Israel. If anyone had reason to view David as a threat, it was Jonathan.

Think about it. David had just done what Jonathan was supposed to do—what the king's son should have done. David had fought Israel's enemies and won. David was now receiving the adoration of the nation. David was the talk of every household in Israel.

And yet look at Jonathan's response. His soul was "knit" to David's soul. That word in Hebrew is the word for binding something tightly together. It's the language of covenant. It's the language of family.

Instead of rivalry, there was unity. Instead of competition, there was covenant.

Verse 3: "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul."

And then verse 4—this is the part that should stop us in our tracks:

"And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt."

Do you understand what's happening here? That robe wasn't just any robe. It was the royal robe. The robe of the crown prince. Jonathan was literally taking off the symbols of his future kingship and placing them on David.

This is an act of abdication. Jonathan is saying, without words, "God's hand is on you. And I'm not going to fight what God is doing. I'm going to align myself with it—even if it costs me everything."

Jonathan recognized that God was at work in David. His response wasn't merely to David's talent—it was to God's evident choice. Embracing David meant embracing what God was doing.

And here's the key: Jonathan could respond this way because his security wasn't in his position. It was in God.

Jonathan understood something profound: David's calling didn't negate his own value. God's blessing isn't a zero-sum game. There was room in God's purposes for both of them.

That's what a heart secure in God looks like. It can celebrate another's success because it's not threatened by it. It can give generously because it's not grasping for position. It can align with what God is doing even when that means stepping aside.

II. Saul Saw David's Success and Responded with Jealousy (vv. 5–29)

Now watch Saul.

Verse 5 tells us that David was successful in everything Saul sent him to do. The people loved him. Saul's own servants loved him. Everything David touched seemed to prosper.

And then came the song.

Verses 6–7:

"As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical

instruments. And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'"

Now, in Hebrew poetry, this kind of parallelism—thousands and ten thousands—was a common way of emphasizing a point. It wasn't necessarily meant as a precise comparison. The women were celebrating both Saul and David. They even mentioned Saul's name first.

But Saul didn't hear it that way.

Verse 8:

"And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?'"

Do you hear that? Saul took a song of celebration and turned it into a threat. He filtered their words through the lens of his own insecurity, and what came out was paranoia.

Verse 9: "And Saul eyed David from that day on."

That word "eyed" in Hebrew suggests suspicious watching. Saul began to look at David the way a predator eyes its prey. Something shifted in Saul's heart that day. The same success that drew love from Jonathan drew jealousy from Saul.

Now, you might be thinking, "Well, that's Saul. That's not me. I don't have spears, and I'm not plotting anyone's death."

Let me tell you about a list on a locker room door.

I'll never forget the smell of that old gym. You know the smell I'm talking about? That mix of floor wax and old leather and teenage dreams.

Ninth grade. Basketball tryouts. And I was ready. Every afternoon for weeks, Coach Little—and yes, that was his real name, and yes, at 5'6" it fit perfectly—Coach Little ran us through drills until we thought we'd drop. Wind sprints. Defensive slides. Three-on-two fast breaks.

And I was convinced. Convinced. My spot on that JV roster was locked in.

Then came the day.

Picture this: the locker room door. Gray metal. And taped to it, one single sheet of white paper. Just names. That's it. No explanations. No "sorry, better luck next time." Just names, typed up in black and white.

I scanned that list once. Twice. Three times.

My name? Not there.

My heart just... sank. But then—and this is where it gets ugly—I saw another name on that list.

Mike.

My friend Mike. Mike who was maybe 5'4" on a good day. Mike who I'd beaten one-on-one about a hundred times.

That Mike made the team. And I didn't.

And I felt something hot and ugly rise up in my chest. So I did what any mature ninth-grader would do—I marched straight to Coach Little's office to set the record straight.

"Coach, I think there's been a mistake. Mike? Come on. I'm taller—well, most people are taller than Mike, so that's not saying much—but I'm a better shooter, I'm faster..." I'm building my case like I'm in a courtroom.

Coach Little just leaned back in that squeaky chair of his. And when he spoke, his voice was quiet. Gentle, but firm.

"Son," he said, "I can only keep so many guards. Mike brings something I need right now. But listen—you've got talent. Real talent. Use this off-season. Practice. Work hard. Come back next year, and I think you've got a real good shot."

His words were kind, but still Mike had been chosen for a spot on the team, while I felt like I didn't measure up.

And how we handle these kinds of moments matters.

Notice what happened to Saul next. Look at the trajectory in the text.

The very next day—verse 10—a harmful spirit rushed upon Saul, and while David was playing the lyre to soothe him, Saul grabbed his spear. Verse 11:

"And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, 'I will pin David to the wall.' But David evaded him twice."

Jealousy had already escalated to attempted murder. And Saul was just getting started.

Verse 12: "Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul."

Three times in this chapter we're told "the LORD was with David"—verses 12, 14, and 28. And here's what makes Saul's jealousy so grievous: it wasn't simply that David was talented. Lots of people are talented. What made it so serious was that God was with David—and Saul knew it.

Verse 28 says it plainly: "Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David."

This wasn't just a horizontal rivalry between two men. This was Saul's refusal to accept what God was doing. Saul's jealousy wasn't just against David. It was a quarrel with God Himself.

And that's what makes jealousy of God's evident blessing so dangerous. When we resent someone whose success is clearly the fruit of God's favor—when we can see that God is with them, and we still can't celebrate it—our quarrel isn't really with them.

It's with God.

We're saying, in effect, "I don't like how You're distributing Your blessings, God. I don't like who You're choosing to use. I don't approve of Your plan."

That's not just envy. That's rebellion.

Transitional Statement

So, God blessed David. Jonathan and Saul witnessed the same blessing, but they had two radically different responses.

Jonathan saw David's God-given success and opened his hands—giving away his robe, his weapons, his very claim to the throne.

Saul saw the same success and clenched his fist—grasping his spear, guarding his position, scheming to destroy.

And each response revealed what was already in the heart.

God's blessing on others has a way of doing that. The Scriptures show us here that **God's blessing on others exposes our hearts**. It surfaces what's really there—whether we're secure enough in God to celebrate His work in someone else, or whether we're so threatened by another's success that we find ourselves at war with God's purposes.

Which response is yours?

When you hear that your colleague got the promotion? When your neighbor's house sells in three days while yours has been on the market for six months? When your friend's child gets into the college your child was rejected from? When someone else's ministry flourishes while yours feels forgotten?

What rises up in your heart?

Devotion to them? Or jealousy of them?

(Pause)

But God's word doesn't just read us and leave us with mere diagnosis. God exposes our hearts not to shame us but to call us to turn away from the path of self-protecting jealousy and to walk the path of self-giving devotion.

Movement #2: God Calls Us to Self-Giving Love, Not Self-Protecting Jealousy

III. The Warning Against Self-Protecting Jealousy

Before we talk about the path forward, we need to let the warning sink in. Because Saul's story shows us exactly where the path of jealousy leads.

Look at the trajectory of his jealousy in this chapter:

It began with comparison. Verse 8: "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands."

It moved to suspicious watching. Verse 9: "Saul eyed David from that day on."

It erupted in impulsive violence. Verses 10–11: spears hurled, twice.

It settled into chronic fear. Verses 12, 15, 29: "Saul was afraid... he stood in fearful awe... Saul was even more afraid."

It calculated schemes of destruction. Verses 17, 21, 25: Saul twice tried to use his own daughters as bait to get David killed by the Philistines.

And it hardened into permanent enmity. Verse 29: "Saul was David's enemy continually."

That's the trajectory. Jealousy never stays small. It's like a cancer cell that won't stop dividing. What begins as a flash of resentment metastasizes into something that consumes your entire life.

Now, Saul's jealousy may seem extreme—spears and murder plots. But the same root produces different fruit in different soil. Self-protecting jealousy wears many faces in our world today.

In the workplace, it looks like the colleague who subtly undermines a coworker's ideas in meetings—not by direct attack, but by faint praise or strategic silence. It's the manager who feels threatened by a younger employee's fresh ideas and finds reasons to sideline them. It's the professional who can't celebrate a peer's promotion without immediately calculating what it means for their own trajectory.

A 2024 study by the Society for Human Resource Management found that workplace jealousy is now cited as a contributing factor in nearly 40% of team conflicts. We've built entire corporate cultures around competition and comparison—and we wonder why our workplaces are toxic.

In the church, jealousy looks like the ministry leader who quietly resents the growth of another ministry in the same congregation. It's the longtime member who criticizes the new pastor's methods because people are responding to him in ways they never responded to the old ways. It's the worship leader who struggles when another

musician is praised. It's the Christian who hears of God's evident blessing on another believer's life and thinks, "Why them and not me?"

In families, it's the sibling who has never forgiven a brother or sister for being the favored child. It's the parent who lives vicariously through a child's achievements and feels jealous when another family's child outperforms their own. It's the adult child who resents that another sibling seems to have an easier life or a closer relationship with Mom or Dad.

In friendships, jealousy is the friend who changes the subject whenever the conversation turns to your good news. It's the companion who always has to one-up your story with a better one of their own. It's the person who distances themselves when you enter a season of blessing—not because they're busy, but because your joy is painful to witness.

Among the young, it's the teenager who tears down a classmate on social media because that person is more popular or more talented. Remember what Haidt documented—hundreds of curated highlight reels every day, and anxiety and depression skyrocketing. That's not a coincidence. Social media has weaponized comparison. Every scroll is another opportunity for jealousy to take root.

Among the elderly, jealousy is the older saint who resents the attention given to younger leaders. It's the retiree who can't stop comparing their legacy with peers who seem to have accomplished more. It's the longtime faithful servant who quietly seethes that their years of service are forgotten while newcomers are celebrated.

In seasons of depression or struggle, jealousy wears a particularly painful face. It's the person in a difficult season who can't bear to hear about others' blessings—not because they're wicked, but because every announcement of someone else's good news feels like a spotlight on their own pain. It's the one who withdraws from community because being around flourishing people is too painful to bear.

In achievers, it's the driven person who cannot rest because someone else might get ahead. It's the high performer who measures their worth entirely by their ranking relative to others.

In the overlooked, it's the faithful servant who has labored for years without recognition and now can't celebrate when someone else is honored. It's the person who has prayed for breakthrough and watches God answer someone else's prayers. It's the

one who secretly hopes the successful person will fail—just a little—so the scales might feel more balanced.

Jealousy doesn't always throw spears. Sometimes it withholds praise. Sometimes it whispers criticism. Sometimes it simply withdraws. But underneath every expression is the same root Saul had: the belief that God's blessing on them somehow diminishes me.

Do you see yourself anywhere in that list?

Now, someone might be thinking: "Wait—doesn't the Bible say that God Himself is jealous? 'I the LORD your God am a jealous God' (Exodus 20:5). If jealousy is so bad, why is God jealous?"

It's a fair question. But God's jealousy and Saul's jealousy are entirely different things.

God's jealousy is the righteous passion of one who has a legitimate, exclusive claim and is protecting something precious.

When God declares Himself jealous, the context is the second commandment—the prohibition against idols. God is jealous *for* His people's worship because He alone is God. He alone created them. He alone redeemed them. He alone deserves their allegiance.

Think of it this way: a husband who discovers his wife is having an affair *should* feel jealous. His jealousy is the right response of one who has a legitimate, covenantal claim. It's protective love. It says, "You are mine, and I am yours, and this matters."

That's God's jealousy. He is the faithful husband. Israel—and now the Church—is His bride. His jealousy isn't insecurity or pettiness. It's the fierce, burning love of a God who will not share His people with idols that will destroy them.

Saul's jealousy—and ours—is something entirely different.

Saul wasn't protecting something that rightfully belonged to him. The kingdom wasn't his to keep—God had already rejected him and chosen David. Saul was grasping for a position that God had given to another.

This is the essence of sinful jealousy: wanting what God has assigned to someone else. It's a refusal to accept God's sovereign distribution. It's not protective love—it's possessive fear.

God's jealousy seeks the beloved's good. Human jealousy seeks self-protection.

God's jealousy aligns with His purposes. Human jealousy opposes them.

God's jealousy produces life and right order. Human jealousy produces destruction and disorder.

Here's the irony: God's jealousy is always *for* His people's flourishing. He is jealous that they would worship Him alone because that's how they thrive.

Saul's jealousy was *against* his people's flourishing. David was winning battles, protecting Israel, advancing God's purposes—and Saul wanted to destroy him. Saul's jealousy put him at odds not only with David but with the God whose jealous love was working *through* David for Israel's salvation.

When we feel jealous of what God is doing in someone else's life, we're not sharing in God's righteous jealousy. We're standing against it. We're opposing the very work of the God who loves us.

Why does jealousy of God's blessing escalate toward destruction?

Here's what I've come to understand: when we recognize that God is behind someone's success, passive resentment won't change anything.

If it were merely talent, we could try to out-compete them. We could work harder, get better, close the gap.

But if God is with them? If their success is clearly the fruit of divine favor? Then our only options are submission or war.

Saul chose war—not just against David, but against God's purposes.

This is the pattern throughout Scripture. Joseph's brothers didn't just envy his dreams—they threw him in a pit and sold him into slavery. The religious leaders didn't just resent Jesus' popularity—they crucified Him. Matthew 27:18 tells us explicitly: "It was out of envy that they had delivered him up."

Jealousy of God's anointed always escalates.

And look where it led Saul. The rest of 1 Samuel is essentially the story of Saul's disintegration. He spent the remaining years of his life hunting David through the wilderness, neglecting his kingdom, spiraling deeper into paranoia and despair.

In the end, wounded in battle on Mount Gilboa, Saul fell on his own sword. The man who had been given everything—anointed by God, tall and handsome, victorious in battle—died alone and defeated.

All because he couldn't celebrate what God was doing in someone else.

Jealousy consumed him. And it will consume us too if we let it.

So let me ask you some searching questions:

Where might jealousy be quietly taking root in your heart right now?

Whose success have you struggled to celebrate?

Is it possible that your resentment is really a quarrel with what God is doing?

Are you more concerned with protecting your place or aligning with God's purposes?

IV. The Call to Self-Giving Love

But there's another path. We saw it at the beginning of this chapter, and we need to return to it now. Because Jonathan shows us what it looks like to respond to God's blessing on someone else with self-giving love instead of self-protecting jealousy.

Let's look again at what Jonathan did.

His response wasn't passive. It wasn't just "I'm happy for you, David." It was costly action.

He gave up the symbols of his future kingship. He stripped off his royal robe and placed it on David's shoulders. He handed over his armor, his sword, his bow, his belt.

He bound himself in covenant to the one God had chosen. He aligned his life with God's purposes rather than his own advancement.

Jonathan could do this because he understood something crucial: David's calling didn't negate his own value. He trusted that God had purposes for him too—different purposes, but not lesser ones.

Think about what this requires of us.

It means recognizing that another's blessing is God's work, not our loss. When God promotes someone else, He hasn't forgotten about you. When God blesses someone else's family, He's not withholding good from yours. When God grows someone else's ministry, He hasn't abandoned His plans for you.

The Psalmist understood this. Psalm 16:5-6:

"The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance."

Can you say that? Can you look at your life—your portion, your lot, the lines that have fallen to you—and call it a beautiful inheritance? Even while someone else seems to have more?

Jonathan could. That's why he could give so freely.

Self-giving love also means releasing our grip on position, recognition, and reputation. In a world obsessed with personal branding, where we carefully curate our image and count our followers and measure our worth by our metrics—Jonathan's example is almost incomprehensible. He gave away his platform. He elevated someone else. He decreased so that David could increase.

Sound familiar? John the Baptist said something similar about Jesus: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

That's not weakness. That's the freedom of a heart that knows its security doesn't depend on its standing.

And here's the beautiful thing: Jonathan remained faithful, honorable, and whole. His friendship with David became legendary—one of the greatest friendships in all of Scripture. He was free. Free from the prison of competition and comparison. His heart was at rest.

That's the fruit of self-giving love.

You see the two paths before us in this text. There's Saul's path—the path of jealousy, fear, self-protection. And there's Jonathan's path—the path of generous, selfless love.

And the question is: which path will we choose when God blesses someone else?

That was the choice I had to make when I walked out of Coach Little's office after not making the team.

Would I let jealousy poison my friendship with Mike? Would I spend the whole year bitter, resentful, every time he scored a basket feeling like a personal insult to me?

Or would I let this make me better instead of bitter?

Because here's what I learned that day, standing outside that gray locker room door: jealousy doesn't hurt the person we envy—it destroys us from the inside out.

When we respond to someone else's blessing with jealousy, we're not hurting them. We're poisoning our own soul. We're choosing to turn what could be a moment of growth into a monument to our own pride.

And standing outside Coach Little's office that day, I made the choice. Instead of letting jealousy eat me alive, I went home and I got to work.

All summer. Every afternoon. Back in that musty gym, just me and the ball and those golden stripes of sunlight on the floor. Over and over. Shooting drills. Ball handling. Conditioning. And you know what else I did? I genuinely celebrated when Mike had a good game. I chose to be happy for my friend instead of bitter.

And the next year, I made the team. Not just JV—I played varsity basketball for the next three years of high school.

Now, I'm not telling you that to pat myself on the back. I'm telling you because that fork in the road I faced—bitter or better, jealousy or joy—that choice mattered.

If I had chosen the other path? If I had spent that year nursing my resentment, poisoning my friendship with Mike, sitting in the stands watching him play while jealousy twisted my insides? I'd have destroyed myself. I'd have become a smaller, harder, uglier version of myself. And I probably wouldn't have made the team the next year either, because jealousy doesn't just poison relationships—it paralyzes us. It keeps us stuck. It doesn't lift us up, it pushes us down.

But choosing to bless Mike, to work hard, to trust God with the outcome? That path led somewhere good.

Here's what I want you to hear: how we respond to God's blessing on others doesn't just affect them—it determines who we become. Saul's jealousy of David didn't just affect David's life, as we will see. It destroyed Saul. It turned him into someone consumed by fear and hatred. Meanwhile, Jonathan's generous love for David? It made Jonathan into one of the most beloved figures in all of Scripture.

God's blessing on others exposes our hearts and calls us to self-giving love, not self-protecting jealousy.

The path of jealousy always leads to destruction. The path of selfless love—even when it costs us something—always leads to life.

Church, God will put you in moments just like this. When a coworker gets the promotion you wanted. When your friend's marriage seems blessed while yours is struggling. When someone else's ministry flourishes while yours feels forgotten. And in that moment, you will choose. Will you let jealousy make you bitter? Or will you choose the path of selfless love and become better?

V. The Way Back for Those on Saul's Path

Now, some of you are hearing all of this and thinking, "It's too late for me. I've already thrown spears in my heart. I've already let jealousy take root. I'm already on Saul's path."

If that's you, I want you to hear this: the fact that you recognize it is itself a work of grace. God is exposing your heart not to condemn you but to call you back.

Most of us aren't at the end of Saul's trajectory. We're at the beginning—the comparison, the suspicious watching, the quiet resentment. And the good news is: you can turn around.

Let me give you some practical steps to **The Way Back for Those on Saul's Path.**

First, name it honestly before God.

Jealousy thrives in darkness. It hates being exposed. The first step out is simply to call it what it is—specifically, by name.

Not "I'm struggling with some negative feelings." Name the person. Name the blessing. Name the jealousy.

Pray Psalm 139:23–24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Second, trace it to the lie.

Jealousy is always built on a lie: that God's blessing on them means less for me. That His favor is a zero-sum game. That if He promotes them, He's forgotten about me.

But that's not how God works. Jonathan understood this. His security wasn't in his position.

The Psalmist understood it too: "The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance" (Psalm 16:5–6).

Can you say that about your life? That the lines have fallen for you in pleasant places? That you have a beautiful inheritance—even if it looks different from your neighbor's?

Third, rehearse your identity in Christ.

Saul's jealousy was rooted in insecurity about his identity and standing. He needed the crowd's approval. He needed to be number one.

The gospel offers a different foundation. Your identity is not your accomplishments. It's not your ranking. It's not your recognition. It's Christ.

First John 3:1 says: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

That's who you are. A beloved child. Not because of your performance. Not because of your platform. Because of His love.

When you're secure in that identity, someone else's success doesn't threaten you. You can celebrate freely because your worth isn't on the line.

Fourth, do the opposite of what jealousy wants.

Jealousy wants to withdraw, criticize, diminish, or destroy. The path out is to actively bless the person you're tempted to envy.

Pray for them by name. Ask God to bless them *more*. I know that sounds impossible. Do it anyway.

Jonathan didn't just tolerate David—he actively blessed him. He gave him his robe. His weapons. His loyalty. Blessing breaks jealousy's grip.

Fifth, confess it to a trusted friend.

Jealousy isolated Saul. He schemed alone. He nursed his resentment in secret.

James 5:16 says: "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Find one trusted person and bring your jealousy into the light. Say the words: "I've been struggling with jealousy toward _____. Will you pray for me?"

There's something about speaking it out loud that breaks its power.

And for those who feel you've already gone too far—that you've already thrown too many spears, harbored too much resentment, traveled too far down Saul's path—hear this:

Saul's tragedy is not that he was beyond redemption. It's that he never turned. He never repented. He never cried out to God for mercy.

The door was open for Saul. He just never walked through it.

Peter denied Christ three times—cursing and swearing that he didn't know Him. And he was restored. He became the rock on which Jesus built His church.

Paul persecuted the church. He held the coats of those who stoned Stephen. He hunted Christians like animals. And he became the greatest missionary the world has ever known.

The thief on the cross had lived a wasted life. And in his final hours, he turned to Jesus and heard these words: "Today you will be with me in paradise."

The door is still open.

First John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The path of Jonathan is still available. Today. Right now.

Conclusion

We've seen two hearts exposed by the same blessing.

Saul's heart—threatened, grasping, at war with what God was doing—responded with self-protecting jealousy. He clutched his spear. He guarded his throne. And in doing so, he lost everything.

But Jonathan's heart—secure in God, aligned with His purposes—responded with self-giving love. He gave away his robe. He gave away his future. And in doing so, he found freedom.

God's blessing on others exposes our hearts and calls us to self-giving love, not self-protecting jealousy.

The question isn't whether we'll encounter God's evident blessing on someone else. We will.

It'll happen when you open Instagram tonight and see another engagement announcement. It'll happen when you're passed over for the promotion. It'll happen when you watch another family celebrate what you've been praying for.

In those moments, your heart will be exposed. What rises up in you will reveal whether you're secure in God's love for you—or whether you're still trying to protect your own position.

The question is which path you'll choose.

Will you walk Saul's path? Fists clenched. Heart threatened. Resenting the very thing God is building. At war not just with the blessed person, but with the God who blessed them.

Or will you walk Jonathan's path? Hands open. Heart secure. Celebrating what God is doing even when it doesn't center on you. Trusting that God has purposes for you too—different purposes, maybe, but not lesser ones.

If you find yourself on Saul's path today—if the Spirit has exposed jealousy in your heart this morning—hear this: the door is still open. Saul's tragedy was not that he fell, but that he never turned.

You can turn. Today. Right now.

Name it. Confess it. Bring it into the light. And ask God to give you a heart like Jonathan's—a heart so secure in His love that you can celebrate His blessing on others with joy.

Because here's the beautiful paradox: the moment you stop grasping for blessing and start celebrating it in others, you discover that you already have everything you need.

May God give us such hearts.

Amen.
