

to envy (v. 9) to fear (v. 12, "Saul was afraid of David"; v. 15, "When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him"; v. 29, "Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.")

Saul had already been rejected by God (chapter 15) so fear of rejection was grounded in fact. He knew he was disapproved and also knew that he would be replaced. David was not an imagined threat to him; he was to be the new king. Saul still had opportunity to repent and bow out graciously. Instead, he yielded himself to sin and allowed himself to become an instrument of Satan. His heart was so wicked that he would have condemned his own daughter Michal, to a life of sorrow in seeing his rival put away.

It would be difficult to press all the points of this account as an illustration of what sometimes happens in relations between Christian leaders and their subordinates. It does serve as a fitting example of a leader who is threatened by a competent subordinate. While few senior pastors throw javelins at their associates, some go through emotional patterns not unlike those seen in Saul.

First Samuel 18:6 describes the welcome the women of Israel gave to the returning army. They had put together a victory song, a line of which said: "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands." The song reflects the insensitivity often seen in people. For example, congregations can be very fickle and remarks may be made that cut at a man's spirit. A senior minister may overhear one of his parishioners say after the new associate preaches,