



## ***LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LADIES***

### **Michal: From Princess to Pawn: Lesson 11**

I find the character of Michal in Scripture very intriguing. Could be because I named my own daughter Mical, although I say it wasn't "after" this Michal because she doesn't go down in history as being a great woman of the Bible. (But we really liked the name!) Maybe it's because I have always felt that Michal got a bad rap from everyone who wrote about her. She seems to only be known for being the girl who "laughed at David." No one seems to notice how she had been treated by her father, as well as by David himself. I know it doesn't excuse her behavior, yet it provides much insight on what brought her to that point. Or maybe, just maybe, it's because I'm always about the underdog, and I want everyone to hear her voice. I pray that as we study her life this week, we'd get a better picture of who she was, why she did what she did, and ultimately, what lessons we can learn from her.

Some writers list her as one of the "Bad Girls" of the Bible, while others call her "Bad for the moment." Liz Curtis Higgs calls her "From Bold Heroine to Bitter Has Been." By the end of this lesson, you can title her yourself ... 😊

#### **First Day**

1. Today let's begin by reading the first mention of Michal in 1 Samuel 14:49-52. Who were her parents? Who were her siblings?

The name Michal is derived from the male counterpart "Michael" which means "Who is like God." It's pronounced MEE-kal, with a soft k. I also have read that it means "brook," so I'm kind of confused.

2. We know Saul was the first King of Israel. We also know that Saul was disobedient to the Lord, and God rejected him. Let's read about this in 1 Samuel 15:1-9. What did Saul do wrong? Why do you think this was such a big deal?
3. Continue reading in 1 Samuel 15:9-35 to get a better feel for what was going on. Observe any interesting facts, or note any questions you have or that you'd like to discuss. Do you notice anything else Saul did wrong?

Because of this story, Saul has always been noted as the man who offered "partial obedience" to the Lord, and we know, partial obedience is really disobedience. Verse 22 reminds us that God delights in obedience more than anything else.

4. Is there any area of your life that you feel you have been offering "partial obedience" to the Lord instead of complete obedience? Ponder that for a bit. Explain how partial obedience is really disobedience.
5. To help us understand a bit more, continue by reading 1 Samuel 16 and describe who, why, and how the Lord anointed the next king-to-be.

We know that David would ultimately become the next King of Israel, and he patiently waited for God to bestow the throne on him. Instead of trying to usurp Saul's authority, or even kill him, he trusted God would put him in the place of leadership in His time. It was a rocky road for David, full of fighting, fleeing, and hiding. But he knew his God would be faithful like He said He would. But Saul also knew that David was a threat to him and he was very jealous. After the incredible story in chapter 17 about David defeating Goliath, the people of Israel began to

elevate David over King Saul, which really ticked him off! In 1 Samuel 18:8-9, we read that Saul “eyed David from that day forward.”

6. Saul decides to try to trick David into fighting the Philistines again, hoping he would be killed. What bait does he use? Read 1 Samuel 18:17-19 and explain what happened. Who did Merab marry?
  
7. We now have our next mention of Michal in 1 Samuel 18:20. What does it say about her? Why was Saul pleased when he heard?

That’s all for today. We needed to understand politically what was going on at the time so we can better understand the plight of Michal and some of the decisions that will be made. Praying that you were reminded through the life of Saul about how important obeying the Lord is!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...” 1 Samuel 15:22

### **Second Day**

**Work on your memory verse. It’s an easy one to memorize, not so easy to do.**

1. Please read 1 Samuel 18:18-28. What was Saul’s plan? Why did he think it was a perfect solution?
  
2. Why do you think Saul thought his daughter would be a “snare” to him?
  
3. Why do you think Saul had his servants communicate with David?
  
4. How many foreskins does King Saul ask as a price? How many does David bring?

5. Why do you think David isn't afraid of fighting the Philistines?
  
6. How many times do these verses tell us that "Michal loved David"? Does it ever say he loved her?

So this is the part where the hair on my neck starts to stand up! Saul is using his daughter for political gain and for his own evil agenda. Talk about a dysfunctional family! It doesn't appear that Saul even cares about either of his daughter's feelings, but is focused only on his own bitter jealousy. I read that this is the only time in the Old Testament where it specifically states a woman "loved a man." I mean, do you blame her? We are told he was handsome, he was a mighty warrior, he was strong, he was humble, he was a talented song writer and musician, and he was available! Higgs wrote, "Imagine combining the fighting ability of a Navy SEAL, the Godly talent of a great worship leader, and the rugged good looks of your favorite Hollywood hunk." Do we blame Michal for falling for David?

But alas, it seems like perhaps David was more excited about being the king's son-in-law than being married to Michal. (18:26) Not really a good way to go into a marriage, right? It makes me so sad when I think about it. She seems to really, really love him, yet she was nothing more than a pawn.

7. So how did Saul's plan backfire, according to verses 28-30?
  
8. Are you ever guilty of making plans to accomplish your own agenda, rather than seeking God's will? Have they ever backfired? How can you keep your motives pure?
  
9. What are your thoughts so far....

### **Third Day**

**Ponder your memory verse ...**

1. Today we get to look at something Michal did right! Let's read 1 Samuel 19:11-18. Observe the facts and summarize the story.
2. We see Michal caught in the middle of a bad situation. Whose welfare does she choose, her dad's or her husbands'?
3. What risks was she taking by helping David escape out the window?

The "image" she put in the bed was a "teraphim" which is a statue that represented household gods. Many commentators fault her for having one in her home as they would be blasphemy against the one true God of Israel, but, it is David's home too. What was it doing there? Hmmm...

4. When confronted by her dad, she lied. What did she say? Why?
5. So, the question of the hour. Do you think she was right in helping David escape by pretending he was asleep? And then second, do you think it was right for her to lie to her dad about David threatening to kill her?

It's hard to say someone is "right" when they lie, but we see situations in Scripture where it was done and seems to be right, such as when Rahab hid Joshua and the spies. (Or when people like Corrie ten Boom hid the Jews so the Nazis couldn't find them.) It was for good cause and to save his life. To lie to her dad about David threatening her would have certainly caused even more anger towards David from Saul, but I sort of understand it. After all, her dad had a horrible temper, even trying to kill her own brother Jonathan in the next chapter for helping

David (1 Samuel 20:30-33). I think she was honestly afraid for her life. Although Michal loved David with all her heart, we never read that she loved God with all her heart. Perhaps if she did, she may have stood up to her dad and trusted the Lord would take care of her. In fact, we never read anything about her faith at all. Although David was a man after God's own heart, Michal seemed to be a woman simply after David's heart.

In her book on Women of the Bible, Elizabeth George uses this text to show us that Michal most certainly contributed to God's purposes by following one of the Lord's principles for marriage: A bride is to leave her father and mother and cleave to her husband (Genesis 2:24). Michal was instrumental in saving David's life, displaying a faithful love towards her husband. She then asks ... "Consider your loyalty to your husband. Do you support him in his role as leader and provider? Do you refrain from criticizing him in front of your parents and others? Do you stand with him, presenting a solid front to your parents and his?" These are good questions to think about. She then goes on to encourage ladies to speak well of their husbands, look for positive qualities in their husbands, and pray for their husbands! Amen, Elizabeth!

6. The next time we hear about Michal is in 1 Samuel 25:44. What does it say about her? Why do you think Saul did that?

This seems like another political move on Saul's part. Although polygamy was never endorsed by God, men still could marry more than one wife, but women could only marry one man. David had already married Abigail (1 Sam. 25:42) and Ahinoam (1 Sam. 25:43). Saul was the one trying to break their vow, most likely in an attempt to block David from ever claiming kingship through her. Or maybe Saul was trying to punish her as well. Scripture never tells us how she felt about being given to Palti. Was her heart broken because of David? I mean, after all, he didn't even ask her to run away with him. He never made an attempt that we know about to contact her after he left, although he had two secret meetings with her brother, Jonathan. He even made arrangements for his parents to be safe in Moab (1 Samuel 22:3) and is obviously fine with traveling with other wives in the wilderness. I know my feelings would have been crushed if the man I loved and who I thought loved me, never found a way back to me. We aren't told how she felt, because it didn't matter, as was often the case with Biblical women. Higgs wrote, "Michal the princess becomes Michal the slave." She had no choice, and she had no voice.

7. We will pick up the story tomorrow, but I do want to ask a few questions to those of you who are married. How faithful are you to your husband? Faithfulness is a lot more than simply not having sex with someone else. Are you being faithful emotionally and spiritually, as well as physically? What do I mean by that?

8. Do you show respect and honor to your husband, both in public and in private?
  
9. Are there any ways that you can be a more loyal, respectful, and Godly wife to him?

Ladies, those are some hard questions, I know. I'm really convicted by them myself. I can easily joke about my husband in front of others, portraying him in a negative way, without even realizing it. And then, there are the times I do it on purpose! God forgive me! I pray that you allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart as well. We don't want our love to turn to hatred and bitterness, as Michal's does in this next chapter.

#### **Fourth Day**

##### **Work on your memory verse.**

We don't hear about Michal again until 2 Samuel 3:13. After the death of Saul, David was anointed king of Judah, but war continued between the house of Saul and the house of David for a long time, long enough for David to father six sons by multiple wives. (2 Samuel 3:1-5) Abner, who was the commander of Saul's army, was not stupid. He saw that David's house was stronger, so he sent a messenger to David, asking him if he'd like to make a deal. (2 Samuel 3:12) David liked the idea, but he had one stipulation.

1. Read 2 Samuel 3:13-14. What was David's stipulation? Why do you think he demands her back? Why was she the pivotal point of this exchange?
  
2. Does anyone ask Michal how she feels about this? After all, she had been married to another man for 14 years!

Higgs writes, “He remembered the price but not the princess all those years. Even though she is a princess, she is traded like a trophy. Why was she the pivotal point of this exchange? Politics. Her father was dead, and the kingdoms were being united. Suddenly Michal had value to David. But not as a woman. As a trading card in a Biblical game of winner-takes-all.” David makes a legal argument, reinforcing his legitimacy as a member of the royal house. Not for love, obviously. Heart breaking, to say the least.

3. Read 2 Samuel 3:15-16. How did she respond? How did her husband?
  
4. How would you contrast David’s measured negotiations with Palti’s public grief?
  
5. Describe how you “think” she may have felt.
  
6. Have you ever felt like you were being used, or put in the middle as a pawn? Although Michal would have every right to feel resentful, angry, or bitter, she could still choose to trust God and honor him by her actions. We’ll see what she does tomorrow, but what about you? Even if you are being used, or your voice isn’t being heard, how can you still choose to respond? (FYI: That doesn’t always mean being quiet, if that’s what you’re thinking!)
  
7. Have you ever been guilty of using someone else? Do you manipulate others until you get your way, including your husband, your kids, or your friends? Think on this for a while, don’t just automatically say no. (Proverbs 26:28, 29:5, Jude 16)

Although David had been busy collecting wives and concubines, what he really wanted more than anything was to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the City of David. The Ark of the Covenant was a wooden chest that held the most holy items in the history of Israel, such as the tablets of the Ten Commandments (Deut. 10:4-5), Aaron’s rod (Numbers 17:10, Hebrews 9:4),

and a pot of manna (Exodus 16:33-34). It was a symbol of God's Law (Exodus 25:16, 21), a memorial of God's provision (Exodus 16:33-34), a place to know God's will (Exodus 25:22, 30:6, 36), a symbol of God's holiness (1 Sam. 6:19, 2 Sam. 6:6-7), a place of atonement (Lev. 16:2, 14-17), and a symbol of Heaven (Rev. 11:19). The ark had been captured, but was now being brought back to the City of David, and when it was, David was ecstatic!

8. Read 2 Samuel 6:13-23. Observe the facts and summarize what happens.

9. How did David celebrate?

10. Where did they put the Ark?

Liz Curtis Higgs describes it this way, "Ditching his robe, his tunic, and all other symbols of class and wealth, David sported only a simple ephod—a ceremonial apron or loincloth that probably covered very little of his ...uh ... manhood. David wasn't an exhibitionist. On the contrary, he wanted to humble himself and identify with his people as their priest, not as their king. How it must have excited the thousands of participants who saw the mighty David celebrating his Lord with such enthusiastic abandon!"

11. Tomorrow we'll explore how Michal responded, but for now, how does this scene make you feel? Do you worship with complete abandon? Are you more caught up with how you appear before man than how you appear before God? God says He wants our all. Does He have it?

### **Fifth Day**

**Write out your memory verse.**

1. Read 2 Samuel 6:16-23 again. Explain Michal's response. Why do you think she reacted like that? Do you think her feelings of rejection or hurt could have affected how she felt?

Some judge Michal for not being down there and celebrating with everyone, but custom did not permit the wives of the kings to participate in festivities surrounding the Ark. Instead, she gazed down from a distance. Again, from a window. I read that it wasn't altitude that was the problem, it was attitude! His neglect of her, his desertion of her, fathering other children, being given to another man, then to be torn from him ... all of it most likely played a part in how she responded. She "despised" him in her heart, literally meaning "turning her stomach." She was probably jealous and her emotions were shattered, perhaps even numb.

2. She waited to meet him, then let him have it! (David probably didn't see that coming!) What exactly did she say was her problem with what he did?

3. Michal seemed to miss the point of his dancing. What was the point?

Michal had 3 problems with his dancing: (1) He removed most of his clothes, (2) the lowest women in the kingdom saw portions of David that were supposed to be the queen's territory alone, (3) he looked like a common fool. She saw it as passion of the flesh, not a passion for God that made him leap for joy.

4. How did David respond to her? Did his temper seem to be flared up as well? What does he remind her of?

5. What was Michal's fate, according to verse 23?

To die without kids was the ultimate disgrace for a Hebrew woman. Some commentators think that God closed her womb, but most believe that David probably physically cut her off and never slept with her again. She never knew him again as a husband, nor was given again to any other man. How sad for her. Theologically, because of God's rejection of Saul, this precluded a descendant of his ever ruling over Israel, yet she is still accountable for her actions. Although 2 Samuel 21:8 refers to the five sons of Michal, most believe she raised her sister's children because of an early death. Those five sons were tragically all hung by the Gibeonites.

So, what can we learn from this story? Although I don't think how David treated Michal was one of his finest and/or kindest deeds, Michal had a choice. She had a right to feel hurt,

abandoned, and resent how the men in her life treated her. Yet others in Scripture were similarly misused and still managed to transcend their situations to honor God. Our circumstances can't, or shouldn't, determine our actions. Our desire to please and obey God should determine them! We can look at Mary, or Abigail, or other women we've studied, and we've watched them rise above their circumstance because they loved God with all their hearts and wanted to serve Him. Michal had the same choice. And she chose to react and respond in the flesh, which, by the way, gets us into trouble every time. It makes me sad for her, yet causes me to reflect on my own choices.

6. You have the same choice. Whatever the circumstance or situation you face, will you rise above it? Will you choose to exercise your faith and place your trust in God; the God who loves you deeply and has a plan for you?
  
7. Read Ecclesiastes 7:14. What does this say about our circumstances?
  
8. Michal has been called "A divine looking-glass for all angry and outspoken wives." Ouch! But truly, what do these verses say about our words?
  - A. James 1:19-20
  - B. Proverbs 14:1
  - C. Proverbs 15:23
  - D. Psalm 19:14
  - E. Proverbs 19:13
  - F. Proverbs 15:1-2
  
9. Michal's ugly heart stopped her from being able to worship God. How does unrepentance hinder our worship? Is something hindering yours? Are you able to leap for joy or are you too busy judging everything and everyone else? If there's something hindering your worship, repent and clean it up! God deserves our whole heart!
  
10. How does our memory verse tie in with today's lesson?

11. What spoke to you the most from Michal's life, good or bad?

12. Do you have any additional insight to add?

I hope you enjoyed reading about Michal. Although I'm still not proud of her actions, I do love her, and I still love her name! It's still a very popular girl's name in Israel, and we hear it every day when we're there. Our tour guide, Yossi, loves that it's my daughter's name. I can still hear his voice say Michal with such endearment...

**See you next week!**