

1 Samuel 18:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

Analysis

And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

The women's song 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands' used Hebrew poetic parallelism with ascending numbers. While praising both, the comparison favored David, creating the seed of Saul's jealousy. Public acclaim, though deserved, triggered the darker impulses of an insecure leader. The song became a recurring symbol of Saul's fear (21:11; 29:5), demonstrating how success can generate opposition.

Historical Context

Women's songs celebrating military victories were common in ancient cultures (cf. Exodus 15:20-21). Such folk songs spread quickly, forming public opinion. The numerical contrast followed standard Hebrew poetic convention but proved politically explosive.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How should we handle public recognition that might provoke jealousy in others?
2. What does Saul's reaction teach about the dangers of comparing oneself to others?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּתְאַמֵּר רַבָּה יְנֵה	בְּמִשְׁפָּק וְתַּבְשֵׁשׁ יָמִים	וְתַּעֲשֵׂה יְנֵה	וְתַּאֲמִן רַבָּה	וְתַּעֲשֵׂה יְנֵה
answered H6030	And the women H802	one another as they played H7832	and said H559	hath slain H5221
שָׁאוֹל Saul	בְּאַלְפִּים his thousands	וְתַּדְבִּיכְתִּי: and David	בְּרַבְבְּתִים: his ten thousands	

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 21:11 (References David): And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

Exodus 15:21 (Parallel theme): And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

1 Samuel 29:5 (References David): Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?