

# 1 Samuel 20:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

## Analysis

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**And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.**

David's oath 'as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth' invokes both divine and human witness. The phrase 'there is but a step between me and death' captures the precariousness of his situation. David's perception differed from Jonathan's optimism; experience had taught him Saul's implacable hatred. Sometimes friends closest to danger perceive its reality more clearly than those at safer distance.

## Historical Context

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Double oaths invoking God and a respected person intensified solemnity. David's 'step' (pesa') imagery suggests an immediate boundary between life and death. His multiple escapes had sharpened his sense of ongoing danger.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do you communicate urgent danger to friends who underestimate your situation?
2. What does David's realistic assessment teach about wisdom that doesn't presume on past deliverances?

## Interlinear Text

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יִשָּׁבַע	ע וְד	דָּוִד	וַיֹּאמֶר	יָדַע	יָדַע	אָבִיךָ	כִּי
sware	H5750	And David	and he saith	certainly	certainly	Thy father	H3588
H7650		H1732	H559	H3045	H3045	H1	

מָצָאתִי	חֵן	בְּעֵינֶיךָ	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵל	יָדַע	זֶאת
that I have found	grace	in thine eyes	and he saith	H408	certainly	H2063
H4672	H2580	H5869	H559		H3045	

יְהוֹנָתָן	פֶּן	יַעֲצֵב	וְאִמֹּל	יְהִי	יְהוָה
Let not Jonathan	H6435	this lest he be grieved	but truly	liveth	as the LORD
H3083		H6087	H199	H2416	H3068

יְהִי	וַיִּפְּשֵׁךָ	כִּי	כֹּפֹּל שֶׁעַ	בֵּינֵינוּ	וְבֵינֵינוּ
liveth	and as thy soul	H3588	there is but a step	H996	H996
H2416	H5315		H6587		

הַמָּוֶת:

between me and death  
H4194

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 6:13** (References Lord): Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

**2 Kings 2:6** (References Lord): And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

**1 Samuel 27:1** (References David): And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

**1 Samuel 25:26** (References Lord): Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

**2 Kings 2:2** (References Lord): And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

**2 Kings 2:4** (References Lord): And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

**1 Samuel 1:26** (References Lord): And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.