

# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## Self-Pity

The tragic story of King Saul shows the damage that can be done, to ourselves and to others, when we turn our sympathy inward rather than use it to help others.

“All of you have conspired against me, and there is not one of you who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and there is not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day” (2 Sam. 22:8).

This whining complaint was spoken by King Saul near the beginning of his campaign to hunt down and destroy David. It reveals a soul that is consumed by self-pity, and teaches some valuable lessons about this destructive attitude.

First, this story illustrates that *self-pity is paranoid*. Saul believed that everybody was out to get him — David, his own staff, even his son. To be sure, there were some differences that needed to be resolved; but to frame these differences as a conspiracy was childish and dishonest. Once a person is convinced that he is a victim, every word and deed can be twisted into another “proof” that the world is out to get him.

As a practical outgrowth of the first lesson, *self-pity destroys relationships*. Saul never had a better servant than

David, who won many battles for him, and truly respected him. And his own son Jonathan was the finest son a father could ever hope to have. Yet Saul’s pre-occupation with his own tender ego burned bridges with these young men and with others, and turned him into a bitter and vengeful old man. Any number of people could have helped him, but his bizarre behavior repeatedly pushed them away. He was determined to be a victim at all costs — and he succeeded.

Finally, *self-pity is self-destructive*. At the beginning of his reign, Saul displayed sterling qualities that could have made him a fine king. But his struggle with paranoia put him on a downward spiral from which he never recovered. All his fears became self-fulfilling prophecies, reinforcing the very myths that prevented him from achieving his potential. In the end, he became a lonely, frightened old man, without friends and without hope. His self-pity destroyed him, and very nearly brought down his kingdom with him.

Saul’s tragic story teaches us that *self-pity is a manifestation of selfish-*

*ness*. One who is wrapped up in self-pity is every bit as self-centered as the obnoxious high-school snob; it’s just expressed in a different way. Everything is measured in terms of how it affects *me*. All relationships first and foremost must benefit *me*. The hardships and problems of others are not nearly as important as those that happen to *me*. The person who wallows in self-pity insists that the whole world accept his view of how things ought to be, and is crushed if the world doesn’t accommodate his wish. How selfish!

Self-pity is a destructive disease of the soul, but it can be overcome. Focus on developing a genuine interest in the needs of others, and you will have no time to feel sorry for yourself. Spend more time in prayer to God in behalf of others, seeking strength to be an instrument of His mercy, and your own misfortunes will shrink in importance.

Sympathy is never wasted, except when spent on yourself. Use your time and your talents serving others, and the “real” you will shine for all to see, unmarred by the ugliness of self-pity.

– David King