



SERMON SERIES BY PASTOR SANDY ADAMS
SCARY FAMILIES: PART FIVE
FAMILIES THAT USE EACH OTHER
TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 18, 19, 25; 2 SAMUEL 6

This morning welcome to another episode of “Scary Families... Taking the Fright Out Of Family Life.” Over the past few weeks we’ve seen biblical examples of how family life can get scary. Today’s message is entitled, “Families That Use Each Other.” And there’s one family in particular, I’d like to focus on - that’s the royal family of King David and Queen Michal... Let’s turn in our Bibles to 1 Samuel 18...

But again, before we dive into our study... *Just to get you in the mood...* I want to show you a few family portraits of what appear to be pretty spooky families... Knowing that most of you live in perfect families - families that *always love* - and there’s *never fright*... Just to prime the pump, each week, I’ve started with several snapshots of what look like *scary families*.

Photo #1... when a bride and groom go horseback riding it’s not a good sign when the groom is on the shetland pony. This could be a domineering wife. Here’s **another scary photo**... Get the idea the groom is showing his mom a little too much attention... **Number 3**, the only explanation I could come up with for this picture... *apparently, this family is just tired!* Last, **in honor of Memorial Day and patriotism**... A family of four - mom, son, daughter, dad - all dressed up as the stars and stripes - *they should be saluted*.

I’ve just shown four families that seem a little scary. But none of the four are anything like the first family of Israel. David and Michal had a frightening marriage. The Bible provides us four snapshots of their family, and each glimpse is a little spookier than the former. All four portraits are scattered across 1 & 2 Samuel.

In 1 Samuel 18 - *Michal loves David, but she doesn’t get to know him...* In 1 Samuel 19 - *they live together, but they don’t grow together...* In 1 Samuel 25 - *he has to leave, but she refuses to undergo his hardships...* And 2 Samuel 6 sums up the results... *she laughs at his worship, and God says “no” to her fruitfulness*. She doesn’t *get to know*, or *grow*, or *undergo his hardships* - and God says “no” to His blessing on her! This morning we’re going to learn that family life gets very, very scary when family members **use** each other.

Realize David and Michal were **a celebrity couple**... David was a national hero. He’d proven his bravery on the battlefield. With only a sling and stone, and faith in God, he toppled Goliath, the Philistine champion. David defeated and demoralized the enemy. When he returned home the Israelite girls all rushed out to greet him. They were dancing and singing, **“Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”** The shepherd boy, David, was more popular than the king of Israel. David was a rock star - a real superstar.

And Michal was also a starlet. She was the youngest daughter of King Saul. Her name means, **“Brook”** - she was the Brook Shields of her day. *(Although later we’ll see she turned out to be more of a drip, than a brook.)* I’m sure Michal was pretty. She was definitely privileged. And she was King Saul’s youngest daughter. She was the baby - pampered and spoiled. It’s been said - in fact, I warned my son-in-law - **“Never**

marry a woman who's daddy calls her princess unless you're willing to treat her like a queen." That was certainly the case with Saul's daughter, Michal.

David and Michal had a celebrity marriage. They attracted the limelight. Their photos were front page in the tabloids. They were hawked by the paparazzi. They were the [Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore](#) of ancient Israel... the [Marc Anthony and Jennifer Lopez](#)... a Hebrew [Kris Humphries and Kim Kardashian](#)... David and Michal were a storybook couple, but like the marriages I just mentioned, their fairytale romance ended up a nightmare. Sadly, [Kris and Kim](#) made it just 72 days. *How's that for a scary marriage?* David and Michal also ended frustrated and barren.

I've heard it said, "[Hollywood wives have signed more marriage certificates than autographs.](#)" The point is, celebrity marriages are *notoriously unsuccessful* because celebrities are *notoriously self-centered*. Actors, star athletes, artists, models, debutants are often too proud, or too jealous, or too materialistic to sacrifice and share with someone else. And it's the sacrificing that makes a marriage work.

This was the problem with David's marriage. His wife was spoiled rotten... Let me say, in most marriages the problems are two-sided. It usually takes two to tango. But in his marriage, the lion's share of the blame rested on Michal. She *used* people to get her way.

In fact, David had a nickname for Michal. He called her, "[Shasta.](#)" He explained, "[She-has-to have this and she-has-to have that...](#)" The only time Michal told her husband he was *handsome* was when she wanted his money. She'd say, "[Hey, big boy, hand-some over!](#)" Michal was **the material girl**. Unlike David, she had zero appetite for spiritual things. She could care less about honor and integrity. She'd do anything or say anything to save her own skin, or get what she wanted. Michal knew nothing of character, humility, holiness. The Bible calls David "[a man after God's own heart,](#)" whereas Michal was "[a woman after her own heart.](#)" David did God's will... Michal did her own thing...

Michal was a daughter of Israel. She knew of the true God. Her dad, Saul, had been filled with the Spirit. He'd been good friends with the godly prophet Samuel. All this provided Michal opportunities to learn of God, but godliness wasn't on the material girl's radar. Understand, life for Michal was all about how she could get ahead - what was in it for her - and this included her attitude toward marriage and family. She *used* David... but in the end she was *refused* by God.

The first time we see David and Michal is prior to the wedding in **1 Samuel 18**. We pick it up in verse 20... "[Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David.](#)" Twice - here and in verse 28 - we're told "[Michal loved David.](#)" But here's the question, "[Why did she love David? What was it about him that attracted her?](#)" Michal didn't even know David. At this point, she'd never met him.

I'm sure she heard of David from her brother, Jonathan. He was good-looking - even at a distance. And by now David was an Israeli folk hero. He was rich and wildly popular - *Jerusalem's most eligible bachelor*. And I'm sure the king's daughter concluded... *if she married David she'd be the envy of every girl in Israel.*

So she used her dad's authority to make it happen. Earlier in 1 Samuel 14:52 we're told, "[Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or valiant man, he took him for himself.](#)" Saul conducted a personal draft. Whenever the king saw a young man he thought would make a good soldier he enlisted him on the spot. Saul just took whatever he wanted - *and is it any*

surprise Michal followed suit? She wanted David, so she manipulated the situation to get him to the altar.

Verse 20, “**And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.**” Michal *used* Saul... but Saul is just as diabolical. He’s about to *use* Michal’s affections as bait in a trap. “**So Saul said, “I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.”**” Saul hated David. He was jealous of his popularity, and saw him as a threat to his throne. So he *uses* the offer of his own daughter to put David in harm’s way... Rather than kill David himself, he’ll *use* the Philistines to do the dirty work for him.

Notice, Michal *uses* her dad without even asking what he thinks of her getting married... But Saul *uses* his daughter to try to kill the man she loves. Saul doesn’t blink at the potential of breaking Michal’s heart. Get the feel for this family... They know how to *use* people for their own ends. This was a family of *users*.

Back to the story, verse 21, “**Therefore Saul said to David a second time, “You shall be my son-in-law today.” And Saul commanded his servants, “Communicate with David secretly, and say, ‘Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king’s son-in-law.’” So Saul’s servants spoke those words in the hearing of David. And David said, “Does it seem to you a light *thing* to be a king’s son-in-law, seeing I *am* a poor and lightly esteemed man?”**” David’s response to joining the royal family was one of humility. He felt undeserving...

Saul’s servants report back. “**And the servants of Saul told him, saying, “In this manner David spoke.”**” This is exactly the humble response Saul expects from David... He doesn’t feel worthy to join the royal family, so Saul appeals to David’s bravado. He challenges David to prove himself, by winning his daughter’s hand in marriage. But the mission will be dangerous... and Saul is hoping David won’t survive. “**Then Saul said, “Thus you shall say to David: ‘The king does not desire any dowry but 100 foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’ But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.”**” Try to forcibly remove another man’s foreskin and you’ve got a fight to the death on your hands... One-hundred Philistines was a death wish.

“**So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king’s son-in-law.**” David relishes a challenge! One-hundred foreskins - no big deal - *how about two-hundred!* David attacks... “**Now the days had not expired; therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed 200 men of the Philistines.**” He probably set an ambush... Caught the Philistines *with their pants down*, so to speak. David was good at hitting below the belt.

“**And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law.**” Imagine David producing a leather pouch, and counting out 200 human foreskins. He throws them down on the king’s table, one by one. If this doesn’t qualify as *a scary family*, nothing will!

Before we move on let me make a comment about this dowry. Granted Philistine foreskins seem *gross* to us, but believe it or not, it had a *godly* appeal to David. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Israel. It was symbolic of His people’s faith. Uncircumcision was a mark of unbelief. Interestingly, a fold of flesh was a symbol of paganism and idolatry.

God commanded Israel to drive the uncircumcised out of the land. Two-hundred Philistine foreskins were actually a sign of David’s

obedience and love for God. Later a tree in Israel was named in honor of David's heroics. The Jews at the time called it the "JU-NIPER" tree. Today it's referred to it as the "EU-CALYPT-US". I have a few more one-liners, but I better *cut it off* here...

Of course, this was not the outcome Saul desired. David had forced his hand, and the king had no choice. "Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife. Thus Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and *that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him...*" Notice again, we're told, "*Michal... loved David.*" But what did she love? She didn't love the man. How could she? She didn't even know David. It seems to me Michal fell in love with a **hero** not a **husband**. She never took the time to learn what made David tick, she just admired his image - his reputation. Michal glorified David's virtues, but she never tried to understand what made him virtuous. She fell in love with how he made her feel - not who he really was.

There's an old song from the 60s. It was sung by the Doors, "Hello, I love you; won't you tell me your name!" This was Michal's attitude toward her husband. She loved him, but didn't know him. She loved his image. To Michal, David wasn't a person, he was an expensive bracelet she wore around her arm to public events to make herself look good. She *used* David. He was her ride to power and prestige. This was why she'd fallen in love - with his *status* not his *standards*.

Michal saw her father *use* people. She'd *used* her father. Now she'll *use* her husband for her own ends. Sadly, some people are **takers rather than givers**. And this is the attitude that makes a **scary family**.

Remember Delilah, Samson's girl, she wanted to know "**the secret of his strength...**" Her motive was sinister, but the question was right. She asked to know. Michal though, didn't even bother. She made zero effort to discover the secret of her husband's strength. Michal loved that David was brave and loyal, but she was so superficial, she never learned why. She never asked David about his convictions and faith in God.

Michal's attitude resembles many families today. Wives like a husband who loves and cherishes them. Husbands want a wife who's compassionate and kind. We all want a godly spouse - a person of conviction who'll be a pillar of strength and example to our kids. Here's the problem... **we want a godly mate, but we don't want to share our mate with God**. We like the fruits of godliness, but we're jealous of the influence God has on our spouse. A Michal doesn't like playing second fiddle to their spouse's commitment to God.

I'm thinking of the husband who resents the time his wife spends at church or Bible Study... Or the wife won't let her husband sign up for the retreat, or the mission trip, just because it interferes with her plans... For our family's sake, we want a godly spouse, but we resent what it takes to make that person godly... Michal loved David, but made no effort to get to know him. She had no desire to share his relationship with God. It was all about what he could do for her. *Why get to know a person if you just plan to **use** them?*

Understand, it actually takes three marriages to make one healthy marriage... a marriage between God and a husband. A marriage between God and a wife. Then the marriage between the husband and his wife. If you want a successful family it's not enough to love your spouse - you need to get to **know** both God and your spouse. You need to *share God with your spouse*, and *share your spouse with God*.

I love this quote by Pastor Charlie Shedd. He writes, "**In twenty years I estimate that I have counseled more than two-thousand couples who came to me with their problems, ranging from the triviality to the tumultuous. Now hear this! I have never had one couple come to me with their**

troubles if they prayed together. One out of none was broken beyond repair if they slipped their joined hands into the hand of God through prayer." Remember what Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes 4:12, "A three fold cord is not quickly broken." It takes three strands to create a marriage that can endure life's stretching. You and your spouse are not enough. Its the third strand, Jesus, that provides the toughness and tenacity to kept you from pulling apart.

To take the fright out of family life - next to my own walk with God - my top priority should be to encourage and support my spouse's fellowship with God. Families need to cut off their own selfishness, and idolatry. *Your own happiness can become an idol.* We need to rally around each other's efforts towards faith and godliness. Don't become jealous. Support the spiritual steps your spouse seeks to take. Be a *help* not a *hindrance*. You need to realize, the closer your spouse gets to God the more he or she will love you.

A second snapshot of David and Michal is found in **1 Samuel 19**. Flip the page and you're there... Here the celebrity couple is in the midst of married life. They've settled down - have their own bungalow. But David's father-in-law is still causing problems. He dispatches an assassination squad to take out David. Verse 11... "Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning.

And to her credit, Michal is concerned about her husband. She's fearful for his life. A homicidal father-in-law certainly makes for scary family dynamics. "And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped." Michal helps her husband make a get-away... then she buys him some time...

Verse 13, "And Michal took an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats' hair for his head, and covered it with clothes." Obviously, she's trying to pass off her husband as a dummy... *at times that's not hard to do...* but here it doesn't work - at least, not for long. But this does give us an interesting glimpse into the married life of David and Michal. The Hebrew word used for David's dummy or "*image*," was the word "*teraphim*" - which were household idols, or talismans, or trinkets you kept in the house to bring good luck. Apparently, David loved the one, true God, while Michal kept messing around with various false gods.

This shows Michal *lived with David*, but she didn't *grow with David*. They slept side-by-side in the same bed, but his love for God never rubbed off on his wife. Michal was a proud woman. She was raised a *royal*. David was a mere *commoner*. She could *love* David, but she didn't want to be humble and *learn* from him.

Couples, here's a scary thought... *God could actually teach you a few spiritual truths through your spouse.* Some ladies love to grumble and complain about their husband - *he's not the spiritual leader you want him to be.* But when the ole boy tries to lead - do you support his efforts - or do you question and criticize? Trust me, men don't like to fight with women. When a husband feels like he has to wrestle leadership away from his wife, he capitulates... or he even vacates. He'd rather walk away, than fight for control. Ladies, a husband will never lead until you're willing to follow.

Back to the story... Michal had set up this ruse, so David could escape, *and she tells a lie.* "So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He *is* sick." "Then Saul sent the messengers *back* to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' hair for his head. Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped? And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go!

Why should I kill you?" First, she lies to save David. Now she lies to save herself... *David never threatened his wife.* And I'm sure her lie only ratcheted up Saul's hatred for her husband. Obviously, Michal had learned nothing about character from David. *She thinks a lie is no big deal.*

In a sense, Michal's deception was a microcosm of her own heart. I believe she put an image in her bed long before she substituted the hairy one for David. Michal didn't really love David. She loved the mental image she'd created of a husband. She tried to make David fit. Again, *she wanted a hero not a husband.* Long before, she'd swapped an idol for a husband.

Every time I watch an episode of Superman it bugs me that Lois Lane falls head over heels in love with Superman, but she won't give Clark Kent the time of day - *when in reality the two are the same person.* The same is true with Mary Jane. She loves Spiderman, not Peter Parker, yet they're the same guy. Why is it women like to fall in love with supermen - and men like to fall in love with superwomen? But neither supermen or superwomen exist!

It's been said, **"Some women believe in dreams until they marry one."** *The dreamboat eventually sinks!* Michal's dreamboat literally went out the window - *and yours will too.* When you love a mental image of what your spouse ought to be, they'll never live up. The idea behind family life is to take people **"as is,"** and grow together into all God has for your family.

Here's an essay by 10 year-old Tommy, entitled, **"What Is Love?"**... **"Love is something that makes two people think they are pretty even when nobody else does... It makes them sit close together on a bench even when there's plenty of room... It makes two people very quiet when you are around and when they think you're gone they talk about roses and dreams... And that's all I know about love until I grow up!"** But the key to marriage and family is to **grow up.** Fairy tale romances are fine when you were 10, but now you're 30, and your husband is as close to Prince Charming as he's going to get. Its time to get beyond the unrealistic expectations, and learn to appreciate him for *who he really is,* and *what he actually does.*

It's been said, **"A wife is a woman who expects her husband to be perfect, and to understand that she's not."** Likewise men tend to expect a lot from their wife. False expectations are a big reason why marriages and families get scary. We need to get the idols out of *our beds* and *our heads.* We need a reality check. Don't expect from a spouse what only God can provide. God is the only person who never disappoints. A good marriage concentrates on *my responsibilities* not *my spouse's responsibilities.* We need to grow up!

Our third snapshot of David and Michal is found in **1 Samuel 25:44**... And this is where the story gets fuzzy. The verse reads, **"But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti, the son of Laish, who was from Gallim."** David had fled into the wilderness to avoid a murderous Saul. For several years he lives on the run. He's a federal fugitive, who hides in caves. While he's gone, Saul tries to crush David's heart, by giving his wife to another man. Palti gets the prize. He and Michal settle down in a comfortable villa east of the Jordan River. It was a cruel act by a mean king.

But the question arises... **was Michal, Saul's willing participant in this betrayal?** Admittedly, we don't know... I am certain that Michal had no desire to hide-out with David. *Wilderness life would ruin her nails.* Think of what those damp caves would do to her hair. What would her friends think if she was labeled an **"outlaw."** I'm sure her convenience, comfort, and celebrity would all take precedent over a commitment to David.

Greek mythology has a story of a handsome boy who loved no one. Until he saw his image in the water, and fell in love with his own reflection. He never saw it again, and grew so lovesick he gradually wasted away. According to the myth, he died and turned into the flower that bears his name, the Narcissus. Michal was the ultimate Narcissist. She was in love alright... *with herself*. And it became obvious when her love for David called on her to endure some hardship. *No way!* She wouldn't be put out for anyone's sake.

You could say, Michal loved David in the *castle*, but not in the *cave*. Though it was his integrity and honor that got David in trouble she still wouldn't support him. Rather than undergo *hardship* she *abandoned ship*.

I hope you realize you don't have to marry a Palti to abandon your spouse in tough times. You can remain married but withdraw emotionally, spiritually, financially. It's been said, "[Marriage is taking turns helping each other endure the storms of life.](#)" Love sticks together... Often you hear of a family splitting over a crisis - *financial struggles... or the loss of a child...* Difficulties either drive a family apart, or drive a family together.

At the seashore you'll see a vine growing on a tree. *And it's hard to tell...* is the vine clinging to the tree, or is the tree sheltering the vine? Actually, *it's both*. One thing is sure, it's the wind that strengthens the connection. And it's often the storm that unites families. I love Psalm 128:3, "[Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house.](#)" In a scary, stormy time a wife should wrap herself around her husband, and a husband should lean in and protect his wife.

I not sure it's true, but I've heard when a herd of wild horses are attacked they all put their heads together, and kick at the attackers with their hind legs. Whereas, when a herd of wild jackasses get attacked, they get tail-to-tail and kick each other. I hope you get the point... Its better to put your heads together than butt each other. A scary family pulls apart during difficult times, instead of pulling together.

The final picture of David and Michal is in **2 Samuel 6**. Saul is dead, and David is home. He and Michal are back together. Michal finally made it... status-wise. She's first lady. David is king, and she's his queen. You'd think Michal would be grateful to God for delivering David, and giving him the throne. Grateful for softening her husband's heart to forgive her betrayal. *But Michal hasn't changed. It's still all about Michal.*

As one of David's first official acts as king he decides to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and give it a permanent home. 2 Samuel 6 is his second try. The first attempt ended in disaster. He was too flippant, too casual with the things of God. It cost a man his life. This time, David worships *God's way*. And everything goes well. David gets excited. He's no longer a nomad drifting across desert sands. He now reigns from Jerusalem, and the Ark which symbolized God's presence rests next to his palace. The King couldn't be happier. God has been so good!

David is so enraptured in the joy of the Lord, so full of enthusiasm, and thanksgiving he erupts in a spontaneous expression of uninhibited worship. He throws off his heavy, ornate royal robes, and takes an ephod - the humble, lightweight garment of a common priest. He begins to dance before the Lord! He whirls, twirls, and glorifies God with all his might. It's been a good day at the office. He blesses Israel. He heads home to bless his family and share his joy. But when the door opens, ole wet blanket Michal tries to douse his fire. She greets him sarcastically...

Verse 20, “How glorious was the King of Israel today, uncovering himself in the eyes of the maids... as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!” Michal had been watching out the window, and she was disgusted by what she saw. In essence she was saying to David, “You're the king now - act like it - what are you doing dancing in boxers before your subjects?”

Michal remembered the regal robes her father wore. Saul loved the prestige and status that came with being king. He would never be caught without his royal vestments. Saul would protect his image at all costs. Michal was embarrassed her husband acted non-royal - like a commoner. *A king doesn't appear humble.*

Remember in the beginning of their marriage Michal appreciated what David was - but never learned the source of His greatness. Now her oversight resurfaces. She respects his position, but doesn't realize it was obtained by walking in humility and trusting God. She still doesn't understand her husband... what makes him tick - the secret of his strength... *and this gets scary.*

In fact, here we reach the tipping point. She's no longer just a bystander as David seeks God. On this day she ends up a wedge - *between God and David.* Verse 21, “So David said to Michal, ‘It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel.’ He throws a little dig at her dad. “Therefore I will play music before the LORD. And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor.” Michal never learned her husband's heart. If she had, she would've understood his humility, and his zeal for God, and his unrestrained worship of God.

Michal was a classic case of what makes for a scary family. **She was a taker not a giver.** She *used* folks - even her mate - for her own comfort and convenience. She never tried to know her man. Instead, she made an idol out of him, and never loved him for who he was. And as a result we read in 2 Samuel 6:23, “Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.” She died a barren, fruitless woman. And that's a scary family. Not just the thought of no kids - but no joy, no love, no meaningful relationships...

Spiritual and emotional barrenness is every bit the blight, as not having kids. And it's the plight of anybody who looks out only for themselves. *Don't be a Michal...* Get to **know** your spouse and kids... **Grow up** as a family... Don't run, but **undergo** hardships together... And God will see to it, your family ends up fruitful.