



David Core Group Study

A Complementary Study to the David Series Spring 2024

A nine-week study on the Book of 1 Samuel. In this study, we will focus on the journey of King David.

Objective

The goal of this study is to learn more about ourselves and God through the life of David.

Introduction

King David is a well-known character in the Old Testament. His story is one we often know *about* but maybe haven't studied personally. This study will provide us the opportunity to get into the nitty gritty of David's life. When we do, we find that, though a king, David faces many of the same struggles, questions, and emotions that we do. He is someone we can often relate to. His failures provide us with a look into our brokenness, and his successes give insight into how we should live our lives. This study will teach us about who David is and who God is, and through that, we will also be able to see ourselves a bit better.

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Week One: Heart

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Opening Question:

What is the biggest question you have when it comes to your faith?

- i.e. If God is good, why do bad things happen? Can I ever sin so much that God won't forgive me, or that He would leave me? Why can't I feel God? If the Gospel is true, why do I feel like I have not changed?

*Have one of the leaders go first to set the tone. The hope of this icebreaker is **not to answer each question** but to give space for people to know that it is okay to have doubts and struggles. Bible study is not a place to come manicured and well-presented but candid and curious. After each person has shared, introduce the study and the character of David. David is someone who we will find has many of the same questions that we may have when it comes to His relationship with God. We hope this question sets the tone for the rest of this study by trying to put ourselves in David's shoes and see the ways he is human like us. (Core group leaders pay attention to what members say because these questions can be addressed in 1:1's)*

Context – show this [Bible Project Video](#) for a complete overview of the Book of 1 Samuel

In the big storyline of the Bible, God chose Israel as His people. God made a promise to Abraham, that He will give Abraham's descendants the promised land. After generations of trials and wandering through the wilderness, Israel has made it to the promised land! As this nation is discovering their identity in this new land, God appoints various judges to lead the people. Yet after a while, the leaders of Israel went to the prophet, Samuel, and demanded that he ask God to grant Israel a king. Israel decided for themselves that instead of having God as their king, they wanted a human king like all of the surrounding nations. God relented and instructed Samuel to anoint Saul as king of Israel. After some time, the Lord rejected Saul and instead picked another leader for Israel. We find ourselves in the middle of this story, with Samuel being sent by God to appoint this new king. The hope of this study is to see how we can find security in who God says we are. This security is evident in our reception of the Holy Spirit.

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Text Questions

1. Any initial observations on what sticks out to you from this passage?
 - a. Take time to discuss all their observations, and let the conversation go where it will
2. What do you make of the Lord saying He 'does not look at the things people look at' and 'looks at the heart' in verse 7?
3. What do you notice happens to David upon being anointed? What is the significance of anointing?



Application Questions

4. If you were to picture God looking at you right now, how would God describe your heart? What do you think God's primary thoughts and emotions towards you are?
 - a. (Do you find that your core group defines themselves by **what they do** or **what they desire**?)
5. As Christians, how do we have security in how God sees us? (**the Holy Spirit**)





Week Two: Faith

1 Samuel 17:1-15, 25-55 *You can feel free to vary the passage length if it would be too long*

Opening Question:

What is your greatest fear?

Context

The last chapter ends with David being anointed by Samuel, though not immediately ruling as king. David instead becomes one of Saul's armor-bearers and personal lyre player. In this chapter, we see Israel go to war against their old friends, the Philistines. Goliath is a mighty Philistine warrior who challenges Israel to send a representative and fight him. David ends up being the only one brave enough to stand against Goliath, but his strength seems to come from an assurance greater than his physical ability. The battle lasts mere seconds as David slings a rock into Goliath's head, killing him. The Israelites win the battle, and thus begins David's fame spreading across Israel. Now that we have discussed security in how God sees us, the hope of this study is to understand who our God is. How we understand who our God is makes a world of a difference in how we approach our lives.

Read 1 Samuel 17:1-15, 25-55 *You can feel free to vary the passage length if it is too long*

Text Questions

1. Any initial observations on what sticks out to you from this passage?
 - a. Take time to discuss all their observations, and let the conversation go where it will
2. What do you think is the significance of David denying Saul's armor in verse 39?
3. What does David's speech in verses 45-47 say about where his faith is?

Application Questions

4. What hardship or challenges have you faced/are facing in your life that have felt as daunting or insurmountable as David facing Goliath?
5. What made David able to stand against Goliath? Was it something he possessed? Something he knew? Was he just dumb?
6. Do we face the challenges of our lives the same way David does? Do we struggle to see God amidst the challenges in the way David sees God?
7. How does knowing who our God is affect how we react to the challenges in our lives?
8. Are we fueled by wanting others to know who our Father in Heaven is?

Spiritual Exercise (Adapted from *Surrender To Love* by David Benner)

It is one thing to know honey is sweet, and it is another thing to taste its sweetness. We need both the head and heart knowledge to understand a full picture. There is a great benefit in knowing our God's love



and power, and an even greater one to experience it in a real sense, a felt sense. If you struggle to apply these truths of who God is in challenging circumstances, try doing this practice each day this week.

Pick a passage below. Rather than trying to analyze the passage, simply let yourself soak in it. There is no need to do anything with the words you read. Instead, let them do something to you. Refrain from examining what is happening. Just allow the words to turn over in your mind and wash over your heart. Prayerfully reflect on the following biblical passages one at a time, taking as much time for each as you wish. Transformation demands more than a momentary experience of love. It demands sufficient basking in this love that being deeply loved becomes the foundation of your identity.

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| • Psalm 23 | • Isaiah 43:1-4 | • Hosea 11:1-4 | • Psalm 91 |
| • Psalm 131 | • Matthew 10:29-31 | • Isaiah 49:14-16 | • Romans 8:31-39 |





Week Three: Friendship

1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-17, 27-35, 41-42

Opening Question:

Who is the closest friend you have ever had? What makes/made you so close?

Context

This week, we are talking about friendship. One of the most vivid examples of friendship in the Bible is the relationship between David and Jonathan. This study aims to see what true friendship looks like, what it involves, and how we can have it ourselves.

We pick up our reading with David at a low point in his life. King Saul feels threatened by David and wants him dead. In a bizarre turn of events, David's closest confidant is Jonathan, the son of King Saul, the man trying to kill him! To bring the truth of his father's anger to Jonathan is dangerous for David, but it shows the full depth of trust he has in him. Friendship can be messy, but these two are a great example of how to conduct ourselves well in our relationships. Now that we have looked at who we are and who God is, we are going to look at how we can form friendships, keeping this in mind.

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-17, 27-35, 41-42

Text Questions

1. Any initial observations on what sticks out to you from this passage?
 - a. Take time to discuss all their observations, and let the conversation go where it will
2. What is Jonathan doing in chapter 18, verse 4? What is the significance of him giving his possessions to David?
3. What do you think Jonathan's friendship means to David?
4. David and Jonathan make and renew covenants with each other (18:3; 20:16, 41-42) why do they do so? Do we need that today? What would that look like?
5. What do David and Jonathan show are pillars of spiritual friendship?
 - a. Shared values (18:1), covenantal commitment (18:3; 20:16,42), vulnerability (18:1-3), loyalty (20:34), honesty/integrity (20:1-3), affection (20:41-42), proximity (18:1-3)
6. How can we have genuine, rich, meaningful friendships like David and Jonathan?

Application Questions

7. How would you define spiritual friendship? Do you agree with the definition modeled by David and Jonathan?
8. Examine your friendships now. What attributes do they share with David and Jonathan's friendship?
9. What attributes do yours lack?
10. How can you be intentional about creating Gospel friendships today with the community you have?



Spiritual Exercise

Think of a way to spend time together as a core group! We suggest lunch buddies this next week. Some prompts to consider as you meet up with them are— share what your experience in community has been, what are you hoping for out of spiritual friendships?

Recommended Reading:

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer





Week Four: Integrity

1 Samuel 24

Opening Question:

We are now four weeks into the Life of David study, what do you make of David? Do you like him? Dislike him? What about him do you like/dislike?

Context

David is on the run from Saul with 400 other men. Saul is determined to kill David and preserve his throne, but can't seem to get the job done. Saul continues his chase and finds himself face-to-face with David once again. Only this time, David has already seen him and had the chance to kill him. The hope of this study is to see the integrity of David and where he draws it from. More than anything he wants to honor God. Above all success or personal benefit, David picks God's way. We want to be a community that can say the same for ourselves. The hope of this study is to see how we should interact with the circumstances of life considering who we are and who God is.

Read 1 Samuel 24

Text Questions

1. Any initial observations on what sticks out to you from this passage?
 - a. Take time to discuss all their observations, and let the conversation go where it will
2. What do you think of King Saul? Do you feel sorry for him? Would you have spared him?
3. Why did David spare Saul?
4. David has 400 men who are on the run with him. Killing Saul would allow them all to return home, should David have killed Saul even for their sake?
5. What is the significance of David bowing to Saul in verse 8?
6. What is the power of living with integrity, how does Saul's response to David give us a look into its effects?

Application Questions

7. Do you tend to live based on what you think is right, or do you place God's will above your judgment?
8. What areas of your life do you tend to live without integrity, and trust in your own understanding rather than God's?
9. How do we act with integrity when others are affected? David refused to kill Saul and it affected the lives of all those with him. How can we live in accordance to God's will amidst conflicting opinions?



Spiritual Exercise – Confession (taken from [Practicing The Way Archives](#))

As we consider the areas that we do not live with integrity we think it is good to incorporate the practice of confession within the Core Group. Whether it is with your one-on-one, a fellow member, or the entirety of the core group we encourage you to carve out some time this next week to confess to a brother/sister in Christ.

James 5:16 instructs us: “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” Similarly, 1 John 1:7 tells us: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” There is a powerful reality to the freedom and healing that comes from confessing sin to one another. Sin loses its power when it is brought out into the light of community, and so by practicing confession we regularly loosen the grip that sin can hold on our lives and reaffirm our fellowship with others before God.

Here is a simple guide for confessing sins:

- Begin by praying David’s words in Psalm 139:

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. *Ps. 139:23-24*

- As you pray, the Lord may bring to mind things you need to confess: a harsh word you spoke to your roommate, a lustful thought you had, a lie you’ve told, or any number of deeper postures of your heart. As the Lord brings them to mind, share them with a trusted friend.
 - As someone shares with you, thank them for their willingness to be vulnerable, and make space to go deeper by asking if there is more that they need to confess.
- Once one partner has finished confessing, pray thanking the Lord for His grace and forgiveness, and then trade roles and repeat the practice.

Some things to know before you do this:

- Confession must be invited, not coerced.
- Make it clear that no one has to share anything they are uncomfortable sharing.
- Make sure to establish a rule of confidentiality.
- Have a conversation about the nature of confession before diving into the act of confession.
(From Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster)
 - One who confesses their sins in the presence of a brother/sister in Christ knows that they are no longer alone with themselves; they may experience the presence of God in the reality of the other person.
 - As long as one remains by themselves in the confession of sin everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother/sister the sin has to be brought into the light.





Week Five: Desert

Psalm 63

Opening Question:

What would you say was the lowest point of your life? Why? How did it feel?

Context

This period of David's life might be his lowest point up until now. He is running for his life, he has lost those closest to him, and he has no place to call his home. During this time he wrote many songs. Some of which we have a record of. Today we will be examining one of David's Psalms, which is believed to have been written during his time in the desert. The hope of this study is to see how we can bring the fullness of ourselves to God in prayer and praise Him amidst the desert.

Read Psalm 63

Text Questions

1. Does anyone know what a Psalm is?
2. Any initial observations on what sticks out to you from this passage?
 - a. Take time to discuss all their observations, and let the conversation go where it will
3. What does it mean that David 'thirsts for God' in verse 1?
4. David speaks of being thirsty for God, yet two verses later is praising Him—how?
5. Psalms are written in poetic language, not meant to always be taken literally— what do you think David is saying in verse 6?
6. Verses 9-10 are quite blunt in how David feels towards his enemies, do you think we can pray like this? Are we allowed to be angry in prayer, can we express longing and admit to God that we do not feel like He is showing up?
7. If God knows all that David is feeling, what is the point of praying it?
 - a. *It is an act of dependence, and because relationships are formed only in this two way conversation. God wants that close relationship with us, David seems to have it amidst being in the valley.*

Application Questions

8. Do you feel like you can bring the fullness of yourself to God in prayer?
9. The Psalms are full of examples of expressing every single emotion to God. What emotion(s) do you feel like you have been holding back from God?
10. How can you take this next week to bring all your thoughts and emotions to God? How can you pray as an act of dependence and not to simply inform God?



Spiritual Exercise

How can your prayer life become a vessel for relating and communing with God this week? Is there something you all can commit to as a core group for this next week in seeking to relate to God? Maybe simply tell God how the day went before bed or express all you are feeling to start the day.

We suggest picking one Psalm and praying through it. You could pray the same Psalm each day this week, or choose a different one each day. Praying a Psalm can look like praying verse by verse what you read or expanding on the heart and emotions of each verse if it specifically resonates with you. You can use this guide from Practicing The Way below for some suggestions of Psalms to choose from:

- To begin your day with God: Psalm 5, 19, 20, 23, 25
- When you are sad: Psalm 13, 22, 42, 77
- When you are in distress: Psalm 57, 60, 86
- When you are scared: Psalm 27
- When you are hurt: Psalm 10
- When you ache for more of God: Psalm 63, 84
- When you want to repent: Psalm 51
- When you are grateful: Psalm 9, 103
- When you want to worship: Psalm 8, 148-150

Before coming back together next week, encourage your Core Group to reflect on their experiences with this exercise. Consider asking these questions in a one-on-one, or sending them to your group chat for people to reflect on in the week ahead or at the beginning of Core Group next week.

- What was difficult or uncomfortable for you when you tried praying the Psalms?
- What was life-giving or delightful?
- In what ways did you find yourself opening more to God? What new emotions did you find yourself expressing to God?





Week Six: Abigail

1 Samuel 25:1-35

Opening Question:

Have you ever had to confront someone for their actions? How did it go? How did you feel?

Context

David is still on the run from Saul, wandering through the wilderness with a group of about 600 men. It appears that David and his men have helped protect the sheep of a man named Nabal. Sheep shearing season means that it is the time of harvest! David, in hopes of repayment for his men's labor, asks Nabal for whatever he may be able to spare. Nabal harshly refuses and sends David away empty-handed. David seeks vengeance, but Nabal's wife, Abigail, acts quickly and appeals to David through God's standards and warns him of the consequences of his actions. Today, we will be looking at a woman who uses all her resources – wisdom, initiative, bold words, and capital – and trusts the LORD for the outcome. This study aims to see how we should act as Christians, guided by truth rather than emotions.

Read 1 Samuel 25:1-35

Text Questions

1. How does the text describe Abigail?
2. It's sheep shearing season! What does that mean? Why does David ask Nabal for help at this specific time?
3. David has been protecting Nabal's men and sheep, yet Nabal denied them any return for their service. Do you think David was right in wanting to kill Nabal? How can the same man spare the life of Saul and swear vengeance against someone else?
4. How did Abigail diffuse the situation? What does she warn David against and remind him of? How does David respond?

Application Questions

5. When do you think it is appropriate to confront someone?
6. Where/when in your life do you see yourself acting based solely on emotion rather than by the truth of God?
7. Like David, do you also see inconsistencies in the way you act in your life? Showing certain people grace, but not others?
8. When we see others acting out of emotion rather than truth, do we confront them and appeal to God's standards and the natural consequences of sin?
9. When you are confronted, are you quick to see the Godly wisdom in your friend's confrontation? Or do you refuse their counsel?





Week Seven: Obedience

2 Samuel 6:1-19

Opening Question:

When do you feel like worshiping God the most? How do you like to worship?

Context

When we left off, David was in the wilderness, running from Saul's army. In the last few chapters, David partners with the Philistines, fights in battle, and continues to trust in the Lord. Saul, on the other hand, falls to the Philistines, and he and his sons end up dying in battle. David takes the throne as King of Israel, and one of his first orders of business is to retrieve the Ark of The Covenant. Historically, the Ark was the manifest presence of God among the Israelites. David wants to bring the presence of the Lord to Jerusalem but ignores Levitical law in his haste and excitement. Defying God's orders for transporting the Ark, David puts it on a cart, and consequences ensue and here we learn the power and holiness of our God. It is only then, in obedience to God's laws, that David is able to take the Ark safely. Today, we are going to look at a tough passage of scripture. The hope of this study is to see how the LORD values our obedience more than our sacrifice.

Read 2 Samuel 6:1-19

Text Questions

1. What emotions does this passage elicit in you?
2. The Ark was not to be touched by anyone, and the result of doing so was death. Did Uzzah deserve to be punished for touching it even when he was trying to save it from falling?
3. What was different and similar between the first and second time David tried moving the Ark? What does it tell us about the significance of our intentions vs our obedience?
4. Based on Obed-Edom's house, what do we see about God's heart for us?
5. David wore the Ephod (priestly garment) rather than Kingly garb while transporting the Ark. What do you make of that?

Application Questions

6. What do we learn about good intentions and obedience? Can the best intentions turn disobedience into obedience?
7. Is it about the size and glamor of our worship or the reverence and obedience to God in our worship?
8. David might have thought that moving the ark on poles was outdated or inefficient. Have you ever had a moment where you felt like God's instructions were outdated? How do we reconcile that with God keeping the same laws for David as He did Moses 400+ years prior?





Week Eight: God's Covenant

2 Samuel 7

Opening Question:

What do you want most in life? Why?

Context

The Ark of the Covenant now resides in Jerusalem, also known as the City of David, but only in a tent. King David has a cedar palace and wants to house the Ark in a permanent place of its own. No more tents! After consulting with Nathan, the prophet, he makes plans to build a temple for God. But that night, Nathan receives a word from the LORD about David and his plans. God gracefully declines the temple and instead grants David an even higher honor. Today, we will be talking about God's promises. The goal of this study is to see what the promises of God are in our lives and what may fuel our desires.

Read 2 Samuel 7

Text Questions

1. What is David's desire in making a temple for God?
2. What is God's response to David? What did David do that God wants to make his name great?
3. The promises God speaks over David in verses 12-16 are partially fulfilled in David's son, Solomon, but greater fulfillment comes from someone else in the line of David. Does the text remind you of someone, who and why?
4. How would you describe David's response to God's promises?
5. What does David seem to want most from his life? God's name to be great or his own?

Application Questions

6. Are you wanting good things in your life—success, prosperity, accolades—for your own sake or for God's?
7. Do you feel like God desires to give you good things in the same way He does David?
8. What is your posture when He grants you good things? What about when He denies you the things you want?
9. What is the best thing God has blessed you with?
10. How can you cling to God's goodness in your life as the determiner of your day?

Spiritual Exercise

This week, as a Core Group, we encourage you to commit to practicing gratitude. There is a peace that comes from committing to thankfulness over the mundane and extraordinary of our day. We can thank God for more than our meals. As we thank God for each and every situation, blessing, and trial that comes our way, we begin to see His hand in every aspect of our lives. From this our hearts are postured



more towards desiring His will over ours because we see a reason to rejoice and give thanks in all circumstances.





Week Nine: God's Kindness

2 Samuel 9

Opening Question:

What is the best gift you have ever received?

Context

As David takes on the role of King, we get to see the type of King he is. David embodies the words of Jesus in Matthew 10: 'Freely you have received; freely give.' Only David is doing this a thousand years before Jesus walked the earth. Yet freely, he has been granted kingship over Israel, and now freely, he uses his resources to bless Mephibosheth, the grandson of King Saul, his predecessor to the throne! David not only grants him the favor of the King but restores his wealth and security for life. Today we will be looking at God's kindness through David. The goal of this study is to see how we can respond to the mercy God has granted us.

Read 2 Samuel 9

Text Questions

1. What does the text tell us about Mephibosheth? What kind of ranking in society would he have?
2. Why does David say, 'Do not be afraid' in verse 7? Being a descendant of Saul, what could Mephibosheth expect to be done to him?
3. What would you have done in David's situation?
4. What does Mephibosheth eating at David's table signify? What about the restoration of Saul's land to him?
5. What characteristics of God do you see in David's actions?
6. How do David and Mephibosheth showcase our relationship with God?

Application Questions

7. Do we see the kindness of God in our own lives? Where?
8. How do the Cross and the empty grave of Jesus give us a similar reassurance of status and prosperity that Mephibosheth has?
9. It is only when we know who we are in Christ that we can humble ourselves to give freely of our time, resources, and energy. What would it look like to give freely as we have received freely?
10. Is there someone in your life that you can be intentional about showing God's kindness towards?

