



Life of David Core Group Study

Be A Man After God's Heart

This 10 week study, written by our good friends who serve on staff at Virginia Tech Chi Alpha, is designed for men. It covers many of the areas in David's life as he continually learned what it meant to be a man after God's own heart. Each study (which includes study material, scriptures, and prayer partner assignments) is designed to have handouts for each Core Group member. There are questions that are at the end of each study that are meant for discussion, but please tailor these to fit your Core Group specifically.

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Seven Practical Commitments Purity Covenant





Week One: Anointed

"Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David."

Ruth 4:16-17

At the end of the Book of Ruth, we find the first mention of King David as Ruth's great grandson. This will be the first of close to 1,000 mentions of his name in the Bible, making him one of our most noted figures and certainly worth our fervent study. As we embark on this incredible journey of David's life and discover what it means to "be a man after God's heart," we are confident you will find hope and inspiration. We begin by making note of David's family history and the history of the Prophet Samuel. Both men came from families that faced many trials victoriously, leaving a legacy of heart and fight that can be traced in their lives.

In the story of Ruth, Naomi, her mother-in-law, faces the death of her two sons and her husband while in a foreign land called Moab, avoiding a famine in Israel. This loss was devastating to her and she was left with the two wives of her children: Ruth and Orpah. Ruth decides to stay with Naomi and care for her, forfeiting her chances of marriage and her reputation due to her Moabite origins. However, God honors Ruth's selflessness and not only redeems her reputation, He gives her an honorable husband and a son, Obed. Ruth and Naomi arise from a place of grief, loss, and devastation to a place of joy, peace, and power as members of Boaz's household. These are David's roots, and this is where his story begins; from grief to glory and from poverty to influence.

David, much like his great-grandmother, is loyal, selfless, full of faith, and courageous. David was blessed to have such a strong family history and generational heritage from God through Ruth. He demonstrates faith and courage while privately killing lions and bears as a young shepherd boy, and publicly killing Goliath, the giant from Gath. From the beginning of Ruth's life we see that absolute abandon to God and His will is preeminent. Likewise, from the beginning of David's life, we see that same devotion to God as a young musician in the fields and in the palace playing for King Saul.

God was so good to David, he never stopped putting people in his life, before his birth and after, with powerful stories and humble hearts to learn from. In 1 Samuel 16, David meets the prophet Samuel. Samuel plays a huge role in David's life. He took the time to hear from God on David's behalf and obeyed God by anointing David as the next king of Israel.

Like David, Samuel's story begins from a place of deep discouragement and devastation. His mother, Hannah, was unable to conceive and was tormented again and again by a "rival" because she was not able to bear children (which was considered a curse in those days). However, Hannah was a praying woman, and she told the Lord that if He gave her a son, she would give him back to God for His service all the days of his life. God granted her prayer, giving her Samuel. Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord and when he was a young boy she brought him to the priest Eli to live in the temple and minister to the Lord. Hence, Samuel grew up as a priest, ministered to God night and day, and was reserved for His service. This was the man who believed in and imparted God's anointing to King David.



After Samuel anointed him, David was never the same. “So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David,” (1 Samuel 16:13). David received a great gift that day: supernatural power from the Holy Spirit. From then on, the Holy Spirit would be “upon” him to make him prosper and succeed in all he put his heart to (*power* or *might* can be transliterated from the Hebrew word *tsalach*, meaning “to prosper or make succeed”). This humble, ceremonial anointing in front of his family, by Samuel, would mark the beginning of a transition for David. God marked him with His Spirit and it made a difference, a powerful difference.

As we marvel at David’s life, we must think about the important people God placed around him to move him forward into his holy calling and the gift of His Holy Spirit. David was great before his meeting with Samuel, but after, he left with the ultimate Helper. He didn’t walk alone and neither can we. So as a man who is chosen by God, don’t forget, you are anointed, the Spirit is in you, He is able to help you prosper and succeed in all God has called you to do!

Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 3:1-4, 19-21

1 Samuel 16:1-13

1 Samuel 17:32-37

Text Questions

1. In 1 Samuel 3: 1-4, Samuel was lying by the Ark of God when God spoke to him. Does anyone know anything about the “Ark of the Covenant,” also known as the “Ark of the Testimony”? What did it represent? What do these verses say about Samuel and his priorities? *Hint: The Ark represented God’s faithfulness to His people marked by His presence. Samuel spent extravagant time serving the Lord and receiving from Him.*
2. Read part of Samuel’s farewell speech to the Israelites in 1 Samuel 12:20-25, and think about the 1 Samuel 3 passages and 1 Samuel 16 passage. What else can you gather about Samuel’s relationship with God and his character from these readings? *Hint: Samuel loved God’s presence, was an obedient prophet, feared God not man, and was a praying man.*
3. What about 1 Samuel 16 moves you and why? How does Samuel impact David’s life in Chapter 16? *Hint: Samuel hears from the Lord on his behalf, obeys God and anoints David, believing in David’s destiny when others did not.*
4. What does our passage in 1 Samuel 17 reveal about David’s character and heart?

Application Questions

1. How does Samuel’s character and heart inspire you and challenge you as a man of God?
2. Why does God choose David over his brothers? Have you ever been in a situation where you judged someone’s character and heart by their physical appearance? What was the result?
3. Why is it important as a man of God to have a “Samuel” in your life? What are some things that hold us back from actively pursuing an older man of God to pour into our lives and how can we overcome those obstacles? *Hint: passivity, thinking we are better than the older man of God as young men, pride, bad past experiences, possible rejection.*
4. At David’s anointing, the Holy Spirit came upon him in power from that day forward to help him succeed in all he did. Read Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 5:5, and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. How do these scriptures encourage you, knowing that the Holy Spirit who came upon David lives inside of



you upon conversion? How have you viewed the Holy Spirit in your life? In what ways has the Holy Spirit made a difference in your walk with God?

5. David was a shepherd boy who became a king because his heart was steadfast. Like David, how can you serve God faithfully in small things now so that you may be responsible for much later? How can our small group help?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7, "But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
2. Read 1 Samuel Chapters 1, 16, 17, and Psalm 18 and 23.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on the chapters assigned for this week:
 - a. What about Samuel's story in chapter one is the most striking to you?
 - b. How do you think David felt being anointed as King and then playing music before King Saul? How does David demonstrate patience and solid character playing before King Saul?
 - c. In what ways did God speak to you when you read Psalm 18 and 23?





Week Two: Leadership

"Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; he is the one.' So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power."

1 Samuel 16:13

"He is the one." These four little words changed the course of a lifetime, a nation, and all eternity. As a young boy, probably no more than 10 or 11 years old, David had a calling on his life. He was designated as the next king of Israel, the shepherd of God's people, the one through whom the Lord would establish an unending kingdom. That was a big mantle for such small shoulders. Maybe you feel like David - small, young, and insignificant - or perhaps you feel as though the Lord hasn't called you to anything of value. Be assured that is not the reality. We are called to be sons of God. He has called you to be His chosen ones, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). As a man of God, you will be called upon to lead in some capacity. As we look at David's journey with God, be listening to hear what the Lord is calling you to.

Even though the Lord had Samuel anoint David as a young boy, He had a lot to do to prepare him for the role of king over Israel. After David had served King Saul for a few years, Saul's jealousy prompted him to try to kill David. That must have been frustrating and depressing. If you're going to be king, who better to study under than the current king, right? But God didn't want another king like Saul, so He sent David out into the desert for a time of unusual testing and training. His first assignment: learning to lead outlaws.

David had never led a force of men before. He had to learn how to organize and train men to realize the calling God had given them. David fled to the caves of Adullam and while he was there "all those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him," (1 Samuel 22:2). That had to have been a rowdy crowd to work with: all the discontented, indebted, distressed guys in Israel. Organizing them, gaining their respect, training them to fight, and keeping them in line must have been a crash course in Leadership 101. David wasn't just taking whomever he could get though. God surrounded him with exactly the people he needed to learn to lead.

Out of that bunch (plus 200 more men that gathered around David during his time on the run) we have a record of David's mighty men. He didn't only lead malcontents, but apparently he gained the respect of some pretty legitimate dudes by the way he handled all the others. His men of renown were guys like Jashobeam, who killed 300 men in one encounter, or Eleazar, who single handedly struck down all the Philistines attacking in the battle of Pas Dammim (1 Chronicles 11:11-13). These guys were literally unstoppable and they followed David! They were so devoted, that when David mentioned, in passing, that he longed for water from his hometown, they went behind enemy lines under the cover of darkness to get it for him! David was so humbled by their loyalty and devotion that he didn't even drink the water they brought to him. He poured it out as an offering before the Lord, recognizing how much that mission could have cost his men (1 Chronicles 11:17-19).

Two qualities that God birthed in David that Saul had grievously lacked; humility and faith. Saul's pride was injured when the women of Israel sang, "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." In fact, he became so incensed that he tried to kill David. On the other hand, David's humility



led to his willingness to seek out wise counsel and submit himself to higher authorities for the good of his people. The reason God rejected Saul as king in the first place was because he disregarded His word. When God told Saul He would use him to wipe out the Amalekites, Saul failed to do everything the Lord told him to do. But over and over again, we see David seeking God's counsel and obeying His directives. One of the most famous examples of this action is when his wives have been abducted along with all the women and children of Ziklag. Rather than acting on raw emotion, giving into despair, or cowering in fear of his men (who were threatening to stone him in their bitterness), David inquired of God as to what they should do. He not only *asked*, but he listened for an answer and obeyed when he got one.

More than anything, David's faith is what sustained him as a leader. It would have been so easy for him to give up on God's promise when Saul tried to kill him, when he was on the run for so many years, or when his own men turned against him. But instead, he believed the promise of God. David acted like a king long before he got the title. He learned firsthand how to lead, organize, motivate, and train people, while earning their respect, long before anyone was bowing before him. Really, titles aren't all that important anyway; Saul was, in name, the king, but he often acted like a coward. Genuine leaders lead regardless of any public recognition.

If you still don't think you are called to leadership, look at Jesus. We are to be conformed to the image of Christ, and Christ organized, motivated, and trained 12 men over the course of three years that went on to turn the world upside down. He led without any significant earthly title, looking forward to God's fulfillment of His word. Don't have a title? Learn to lead anyway. As God's children, that's what you were born to do.

Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 21:10, 22:1-2
1 Chronicles 11:10-19
1 Samuel 30:1-8

Text Questions

1. List the qualities of the men described in 1 Samuel 21 and 22 that rallied around David and contrast them with the qualities mentioned or implied in 1 Chronicles 11. How do you think David's leadership of the first group might have attracted the second group? *Hint: Because David led difficult, disgruntled men so well, this leadership ability may have attracted his mighty men to join his "team."*
2. According to 1 Chronicles 11:10, what had the Lord promised David? Why did his mighty men gather around him?
3. In 1 Samuel 30, David and his men are returning from battle lines that the Philistines had drawn against Saul and his men. How do you think they felt when they made it back to their hometown and saw what had happened in their absence?
4. What did David do in response to his men's bitterness of soul?

Application Questions

1. In what ways is God calling you to lead right now as a college student? What character qualities of a strong leader could our small group stand with you in prayer for?
2. What are David's strongest leadership qualities in your opinion?



3. Think back to what the Lord had promised to David as indicated by his anointing and mentioned in 1 Chronicles 11. Yet we see in 1 Samuel 21 and 22 that he is essentially forced to flee the country. Have you ever received a promise from the Lord that your circumstances contradicted? Are you still believing He will bring it to pass? What are some things you can do to keep that hope alive?
4. How might you be called to lead in the future? Do you ever feel like God has given you a dream, but not the right tools to work with? How are you using what God has given you now to prepare for your future?
5. When difficult circumstances confront you, do you react like David and seek the Lord? Or do you look at your circumstances and act in your flesh? What steps can we help you take as a small group to help you respond rather than simply react?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 30:6, "David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God."
2. This week read 1 Samuel 13-15, Psalm 34, and Psalm 56
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on the above readings.
 - a. What are King Saul's character strengths and weaknesses as a leader from these chapters?
 - b. Why was the role of king taken from Saul according to Samuel's words? How does this impact your view of God as a Just Judge?
 - c. How can you see similar shortcomings in your own life and what do you need to do to overcome them?
 - d. How do these two Psalms, written from his experience in 1 Samuel 21, impact you?





Week Three: Honor

“David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’”

2 Samuel 9:1

Honor is a slippery word. Merriam-Webster defines it as “a keen sense of ethical conduct: integrity. For example, ‘a man of honor.’ Or: one’s word given as a guarantee of performance. For example, ‘on my honor, I will...’” Honor, like integrity, is the decision to do the right thing for the right reason, regardless of the benefits or consequences you might receive. The writer of 1 and 2 Samuel presents a beautiful picture of David as an honorable man in his dealings with Jonathan and Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son. The story begins with David fleeing from Saul after the king attempted to kill him twice. In his distress, he seeks out Jonathan, his best friend, and asks him to find out whether or not Saul will relent. Despite Jonathan’s knowledge that David will succeed to the throne instead of him and Jonathan’s sworn loyalty to his father as the king, he agrees to go on behalf of his friend.

Jonathan’s willingness to help is remarkable and honorable in its own right. He could easily have given David false information to retain his right to the throne. He also faced immense pressure from Saul who reminded his son, “As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!” (1 Samuel 20:31). Instead, Jonathan promised to send David away safely if Saul intended to harm him. In return, he asked David to swear to “show... unfailing kindness like that of the Lord as long as I live... and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family – not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth,” (1 Samuel 20:14-15).

The kindness David swears to show is *hesed* in Hebrew. “[*Hesed*] has theological significance throughout the Old Testament, denoting the life-sustaining grace of God bestowed on humans and making it possible to have a loving relationship with Him,” (*NIV Application Commentary*). To fulfill this promise will require sacrificial love “like that of the Lord”. This covenant “would later lead David to defy conventional wisdom regarding the elimination of potential rivals to the throne” (*New American Commentary*). Jonathan asked David to make an oath to him because of their friendship, but acting on that oath could have endangered David’s kingship.

In 2 Samuel 9, David’s kingdom has finally been established and his enemies vanquished. “After all he had suffered at the hands of Saul, it would have been understandable if David had conveniently forgotten his promise to Jonathan” (*Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*). However, David asks Ziba, a former servant of Saul, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” (2 Sam 9:1). No one is holding David accountable for the covenant he made. Jonathan is dead, and yet he is intentionally working toward fulfilling the promise he made at least 20 years before.

Ziba, one of Saul’s former servants, informs David of the existence of Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s crippled son. 2 Samuel 4 helps us understand this man’s beginnings: “He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled,” (2 Samuel 4:4). Mephibosheth had a rough time of it. He was crippled through



no fault of his own and if he wasn't orphaned when his father was killed, then he was likely raised in a single parent home. Not only that, but we also learn in 2 Samuel 9 that he had been living with his wife and son "in a self-imposed internal exile... in Lo Debar" (*New American Commentary*). This guy needs some serious inner healing. He's been wounded and broken both physically and emotionally in his childhood and is living in Lo Debar which is literally translated to "no word." He has removed himself from any possible relationship with the king.

Doubtless, the summons of King David struck fear into the heart of Saul's grandson. Knowing how other kings exterminated potential rivals, Mephibosheth could not have expected any benefit from the meeting. But against all custom and even common sense, David acts extremely honorably, saying, "Don't be afraid, ...for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table," (2 Samuel 9:7). It would have been wise in the world's eyes for David to eliminate Mephibosheth and keep Saul's wealth for himself. It seems absurd that he would invite this broken man to eat at his table, a place of prominence, where the princes sat and affairs of state might have been conducted. But, in accordance with his vow, he not only spared Jonathan's son, he also blessed him generously with wealth, position, and a relationship with the king himself.

While David was often sinful and allowed his flesh to trip him up, in this situation he truly shines as a man after the Father's heart. We are, in a sense, Mephibosheth – broken, wounded people who have removed themselves from relationship with the King of kings and deserve to be eliminated. But God, against all custom and common sense, offered His Son in our place and offers us a place of honor at His table. How great is the Father's love toward us that we should be called His sons!

The honor David demonstrated required him to disregard the potential hurt of fulfilling his promise and to scorn the benefits that could be kept by breaking his word. It requires men today to do the same. There is a severe lack of honor in our nation: politicians are unreliable; professional athletes abuse their fame exploiting others to get what they want; CEOs try to gain all they can financially, without a thought for their employees or customers. Those who keep their word do it only if it benefits them. "We tend to keep covenant with those who will repay us in some way. Such calculated covenant faithfulness manifests our falseness rather than our integrity" (*NIV Application Commentary*). We must be willing to deal honorably and mercifully just as the Lord does with us if we are to shine light into the darkness of this world.

Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 20:1-15
2 Samuel 9:1-11

Text Questions

1. What are the promises that Jonathan and David made to one another? How might these have violated custom?
2. What kind of kindness does Jonathan make David promise to show? Why is this important?
3. What do we know about Mephibosheth? Why is it significant that he is the recipient of David's kindness? (*Possible answers: He is Jonathan's son, He is Saul's grandson, He has nothing to offer David, etc.*)
4. What does David promise Mephibosheth?



5. How does David's extension of mercy and grace to Mephibosheth mirror the Father's heart for his people?
- 6.

Application Questions:

1. Look back at the definition of honor in the article. How did David exemplify this in his actions towards Mephibosheth? What commitments to others have you made that need to be acted on?
2. What are some areas in collegiate life that we see a lack of honor? Give some examples. (*Making excuses for late homework, lying to professors, lying on applications, not showing up to student organizations you have committed to be a part of, broken promises in personal relationships, etc.*) In what areas do you find it most challenging to act honorably?
3. How does God act with *hesed*, or covenant love and kindness? In what way have you experienced God's *hesed*?
4. What commitments have you made to the Lord to show *hesed* in your relationship with Him and in your relationships with others? Have you wavered in fulfilling them because of potential embarrassment, loss of personal time, etc.? How can you fulfill those commitments? Are there ways we can support you as a small group to fulfill them?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 20:14-15, "But show me unfailing kindness like the Lord's kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family - not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."
2. This week read 1 Samuel 20, 2 Samuel 9, 16, and 21.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on this week's reading.
 - a. Do you think David weighed the potential consequences of his covenant with Jonathan? Do you think he wavered in deciding to fulfill his promise? Why or why not?
 - b. How does God act with *hesed* toward His people?
 - c. Are there promises you have made that may be difficult to fulfill because of the potential consequences? How can you choose to be honorable in those situations?





Week Four: Purity

"Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

2 Timothy 2:22

Paul knew when he penned this how difficult the fight for sexual purity was and his advice: don't fight in your own strength; flee! The mighty King David, into whose hand God gave the lion, the bear, Goliath, and so many nations, fell to this secret sin. He tried to cover it up, but the Lord is not blind, and He called David to account by sending his friend, Nathan, to call him out. Even David, one of the greatest warriors of all time, couldn't fight this battle (or flee it) alone. He needed help.

Sometimes, we have to choose our battles. There are so many temptations in this world that we do not have the resources to fight and withstand them all. Both the writer of Proverbs and the apostle Paul admonish us to stay far away from sexual temptation. Or, if the temptation comes to us, to flee! The Greek word Paul uses in 2 Timothy 2:22 is *phuego*, which means to escape safely out of danger. The writer of proverbs describes a "youth who had no sense [who] was going down the street near [temptation's] corner, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in," (Proverbs 7:7-9). This is a young man putting himself directly in the way of temptation. He is in the wrong place at the wrong time with no accountability.

This is the same place we find David when we look at 2 Samuel 11. The author begins, "In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army," (verse 1). Rather than going out with his men and doing what needed to be done, David decided to lounge around the palace alone. The story very quickly deteriorates from there: "One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing," (verse 2). This is the point at which David should have turned around and walked away, but instead, "the woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, 'She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite,'" (verse 3). Now David has a decision to make: he could still flee, say, "Thanks for the info," and turn and walk away. But he didn't. Instead, "David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her," (verse 4).

The first problem is that David wasn't where he was supposed to be. "In the spring... kings go off to war," but David was at home. Do you find yourself struggling more when you are in your dorm room alone when you could be at class, or eating a meal with someone, or at a Chi Alpha event? Maybe you should make sure you are where you are supposed to be. The second problem was that David ignored all the "stoplights." He could have stopped when he saw Bathsheba on the roof – just turned and walked away. He could have stopped when his messenger brought back the information he requested – turned and jogged away. He could have stopped when Bathsheba showed up – turned and run away (and shouted over his shoulder for them to take her home!). But he didn't.

Do you recognize and heed the stoplights? Maybe an ad pops up on your computer – just close the ad and walk away. Maybe you go to a party and there's a room full of beautiful, not-so-modest-women – just leave and jog away. Maybe you're at home alone with your girlfriend – get up and run away! Don't ignore



the stoplights like David did. Jesus encouraged his disciples to “keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” (Matthew 26:41). In order to recognize the stoplights and overcome temptation, we need to be men who pray without ceasing and remain on the watch. We cannot afford to be careless in this area of sexual purity; we need to be on our toes till we are taken home.

David’s attempt to hide his sin only made the situation worse. Rather than confessing, repenting, and making atonement for his sin (under the Abrahamic covenant), he had Bathsheba’s husband killed and made her his wife. Not until God revealed the truth to Nathan did David truly face his sin and deal with it with God’s help. Hiding sin doesn’t make it go away; the only thing that erases our mistakes and gives us a clear conscience is the blood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. James encourages us to “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed,” (James 5:16). Confession and repentance within accountability are an important part of that healing process.

The fight for purity demands a fireproof strategy that can stand up under immense pressure. We find that strategy in the Word. Paul reminded Timothy that wisdom demands that we flee from temptation (2 Timothy 2:22). James encourages men to resist the devil, reminding us that when we stand firm in Christ, the enemy will flee from us (James 4:7-8,10). And lastly, we are to put on the whole armor of God. With the shield of faith, we can quench the enemy’s fiery darts; with the shoes of the gospel of peace, we can stand firm; with the belt of truth, we can gird ourselves up; with the breastplate of righteousness, we can guard our hearts; and with the helmet of salvation, we can defend our minds. But the only weapon we have to actually fight back is the Word. Memorize it, soak in it, meditate on it, and use it to combat the enemy’s lies.

Some of you reading right now may feel defeated in the arena of purity. You might feel like it is impossible to be pure in our world today, and the only thing you think you can do now is make excuses. A wise man once said, “Leadership is about taking responsibility, not making excuses.” To be a leader is to engage in the fight and to know when to flee – no excuses. God gives grace to the humble and His mercies are new for you today. You can pick up your sword, strap on your shoes and re-engage in this battle. Your purity is worth it. The question is, will there be a man of God who arises and says, “Enough is enough!”? Who is going to move from a place of passivity in this area to a place of action, living in freedom from sexual immorality? With God’s help, you can be that man.

Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 11:1-17, 26-27

2 Samuel 12:1-18

Psalm 51:1-13

Text Questions

1. According to 2 Samuel 11, where was David supposed to be during this time? In what ways does this make him a target for temptation from Satan? *Hint: idle, bored, isolated from community.*
2. What “stoplights” did David miss as he pursued his own pleasure?
3. How did David try to hide his sin at first? When this first effort failed what did he do? How does one sin sometimes perpetuate another?
4. What is David’s reaction to Nathan’s confrontation in 2 Samuel 12:13? How does David’s reaction to his sin differ from that of King Saul in 1 Samuel 15:13-20?



5. In 2 Samuel 12:15-24, what does David do and say in response to the sickness and death of his child?" *Hint: He contends for the child, but then moves on afterward. So he recognizes his sin and need for God, but does not continually wail and mourn with condemnation.*
6. In Psalm 51, David is repenting to God for what he did. What verse is the most powerful to you and why?

Application Questions

1. How are you currently feeling in the battle for your sexual purity? Defeated, struggling, overcoming, or victorious?
2. Read Isaiah 9:7, Isaiah 22:22, and Revelation 22:16. In what ways does it encourage you to know that Jesus Christ came from the line of David, Jesus quoted David when he lived, and David was remembered in Acts as a man after God's heart? What does this reveal about God's heart towards us even though we stumble and fall?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 7:10, in what ways did David demonstrate godly sorrow and true repentance after he stumbled? What can we learn about repentance from David's reaction to his sin after Nathan confronts him in Psalm 51?
4. Have you established a "watch" in your life in regards to sexual purity? (i.e. practical steps that help preserve it, like: an accountability partner, programs on your computer or phone that alert your partner to harmful activity, going to bed early, fasting from media, eating healthy, exercising, working, community, etc.) Have you established a focused prayer life to be victorious in this area? How can our small group help each other in this area of watching and praying?
5. Please take some time to read the purity covenant and let's discuss how we can put this into action and help each other. If you feel led to sign it at the end of this small group, please do so.

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: Psalm 51:10-13 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you."
2. This week re-read 2 Samuel 12, read 1 Kings 1, Psalm 24, and Psalm 73.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on the above readings.
 - a. In your re-read of 2 Samuel 12, was there anything that spoke to you this time that you didn't catch in your reading at small group?
 - b. In what ways does 1 Kings 1 demonstrate the fulfillment of God's promise that Solomon would be the next king after David?
 - c. What do these Psalms say about a pure and undivided heart towards God and how did these Psalms speak to you?





Week 5: Brotherhood

“Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as he loved himself... And Jonathan made a covenant with David...” 2 Samuel 1:26

Fraternity, brotherhood, comradeship, there are a dozen names for the bond that exists between friends, but no word could fully encompass the depth of emotion, loyalty, sacrifice, and love embodied in them. The bond is rare and often takes either years or extreme circumstances to be forged. The first we hear about the friendship of David and Jonathan is in 1 Samuel 18:1, “Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.” Other versions say, “the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David.” God joined the hearts of these two men and it all began with a covenant, “Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt,” (1 Samuel 18:3-4).

The depth we see in this exchange is really astonishing; it represents the willingness of an intimate friend to sacrifice. Jonathan’s relinquishment of his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt symbolized his covenant tangibly, while also representing the sacrifice of his title and position. You see, Jonathan was the “heir apparent.” That is, he was next in line to be the king, after Saul. No one expected him to give up his power and position, regardless of the prophecies concerning David. No one expected him to essentially abdicate his role to David so willingly. He was David’s intimate friend and he was willing to sacrifice because of that bond.

But Jonathan would suffer more than the loss of his position for David’s sake. He was also faced with the choice of whether or not to stand in his friend’s defense. Just as David and Jonathan found their hearts knit together by the Lord, Saul was turning against his son’s best friend with a jealous hatred. Saul began to obsess about killing David because he saw him as a threat to his and Jonathan’s legacy. David fled his wrath, but before making the decision to leave for good, he sought Jonathan out and pleaded with him to stand in his defense. The tone between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20 is full of deep emotion. David is overwrought, almost despairing. Beth Moore says he “came very close to holding Jonathan responsible for Saul’s actions and Jonathan came very close to getting defensive.” But David’s friend does not take offense, instead he responds with great loyalty, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you,” (1 Samuel 20:4). Jonathan is willing to stand up, even to his father, the king, on behalf of his dear friend.

The exchange between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20 also demonstrates a key characteristic of the true bond of brotherhood: complete freedom. Because he chose not to take offense when David was panicked, Jonathan gave David complete freedom to speak his mind without fear. Charles Swindoll said, “When your heart is broken you can bleed all over a friend like this and he will understand. He won’t confront you in your misery or share with you three verses and then tell you to straighten up.” When you are hurting, a real friend will let you hurt and be yourself, standing by you no matter what that self looks like.

That *doesn’t* mean a real friend will let you wallow. The last interaction we see between David and Jonathan occurs after David has hit proverbial “rock bottom.” He is hiding out in the desert after fleeing from Saul, and Jonathan comes to him. Amazing, the son of the man who has a hit out on David comes to



encourage him in the wilderness. The presence of his best friend no doubt encouraged David's heart to some extent, but the truthful words of Jonathan may have had the most profound effect. Jonathan comes to "help David find strength in God" and reminds him that "You will be king over Israel and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this," (1 Samuel 23:16-17). Jonathan didn't allow David to wallow in his pain, sorrow, doubt, or fear. He listened, he was a shoulder to cry on, and then he reminded David of the truth of who he was.

Please note that Jonathan had already laid the foundation to be able to come alongside his friend, through his willingness to sacrifice on his friend's behalf and his choice to stand in his defense. Jonathan's selfless behavior toward David set the stage for him to be able to speak truth into his life. And the words he spoke in the Desert of Ziph weren't the first time he had reminded David of what the Lord had promised him. When David was seeking Jonathan to intercede for him, these brothers made another covenant before the Lord – Jonathan declared his intentions of faithfulness to David and declared:

May the Lord be with you as He has been with my father. But show me unfailing kindness... and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family – not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth. (1 Samuel 20:13-15)

Jonathan was a source of constant encouragement to David, reminding him of his calling even as he walked through the painful trials God used to refine him.

Do you have intimate friends like this? Often we have only one, occasionally two, usually not more than three in our entire lives. When God knits your heart with another's, it is a precious gift, to be valued, cultivated, and protected. Invest in friendships with others. Jonathan had nothing to gain and everything to lose when he threw in his lot with David. His was a selfless love. David, likewise, could have been suspicious of Jonathan because of his position and pushed him away, but instead, each embraced the other as a gift from God. It is not good for man to be alone, and sometimes God gives us brothers, so that we can sharpen each other and persevere to become all He has called us to be.

Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 18:1-4

1 Samuel 20:16-17, 24-41

1 Samuel 23:15-18

2 Samuel 1:11-12, 23-26

Text Questions

1. How does 1 Samuel 18 say Jonathan loved David? How did he demonstrate this love in 1 Samuel 20?
2. What does Jonathan do when Saul curses at him and tries to kill him? How might we have expected him to respond? (*Jonathan fasts because of his anger at Saul's poor treatment of David, but his own father just tried to kill him!*)
3. What did Jonathan say to encourage David when he was in the Desert of Ziph? Why are these things significant in showing Jonathan's heart toward his friend?
4. Where do we finally see David's feelings for Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1? How does he express the depth of their bond and what does this mean?



(IMPORTANT NOTE: David says that Jonathan's love was more wonderful than that of women. This does not mean that David and Jonathan had a sexual relationship. Rather, Jonathan was a closer friend to David than any of his wives, as might be expected in an ancient patriarchal society where marriage did not always mean closeness or friendship.)

Application Questions

1. Scripture does not specifically say that David and Jonathan went to battle together, yet they possess a bond not unlike one between warriors who have fought side by side. How did this deep loyalty and camaraderie develop between them? Have you had a friendship like this? How did the bond between you form?
2. In what ways can having a "Jonathan" in your life draw you closer to the Lord? (*Hint: Jonathan was purposeful in his friendship with David to encourage him, assert himself to meet him in difficult circumstances, and call him out; loyal, extremely selfless*). What are the Christ-like characteristics in Jonathan that you value the most and why?
3. Read Proverbs 18:24. What do you think this verse means? Are you a man who strives to have many companions or do you invest in friends with whom God has knit your heart? Would you rather be popular with many or deeply known by a few? Why?
4. List some instances in which Jonathan showed loyalty to David or vice versa. Have you ever experienced (or shown) loyalty like this? What kind of impact did it have on your friendship?
5. What can we do as a small group to foster deep relationships and build trust with one another? How can we create an environment where we are free to speak our minds, be ourselves, and give encouragement to one another?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 18:3, "And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as he loved himself."
2. This week read 1 Samuel 18, 23, Psalm 59, Psalm 142, and 2 Samuel 1.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on the above readings.
 - a. What do you consider to be the catalyst or starting point for Jonathan and David's friendship? How was God a part of this?
 - b. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. How do Jonathan and David exemplify the message of these verses?
 - c. How can you invest in the friendships you have more selflessly?
 - d. David wrote these Psalms when fleeing for his life and hiding; in what ways can you relate to his words and heart? How do these Psalms speak to you?





Week Six: *Ut Prosim*

“David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’” 1 Samuel 17:32

Of all the stories in the Bible, David and Goliath may be one of the most told and well loved. Rather than re-telling the story here, we want to focus on three key pieces of David's decision that led to an attitude of *Ut Prosim* – “That I May Serve.”

First, it is evident that David possessed “divinely guided insight that others lacked” that allowed him to see both the problem and the solution (*NIV Application Commentary*). “Now the Israelites had been saying, ‘Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel,’” (1 Samuel 17:25). The Israelite army was terrified by Goliath as he came out day after day, morning and evening, to issue his challenge. They kept calling him “this man,” but David calls him what he really is: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” The petrified warriors only saw an insurmountable obstacle to victory. David saw an arrogant man who couldn't help but fall before the majesty and power of the living God. Goliath was the problem, God's power and sovereignty was the solution.

David was motivated to serve by his faith in God's character and His power. When Saul rebuts his offer to fight Goliath, saying he is too young and too weak, David is prepared with an answer: “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine,” (1 Samuel 17:37). David has personal experience with the goodness and faithfulness of God and a sharp memory. Too often we allow ourselves to remember our failures rather than God's successes. It is important to train our minds in such a way that our faith is made stronger through calling to remembrance the authority and reliability of our Father in past circumstances.

Last, but perhaps most importantly, “David was aware of the means by which the victory would be accomplished. He understood that faith in Yahweh was the determining Factor” (*NIV Application Commentary*). His declaration to Goliath makes the source of his confidence unmistakable:

You have come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ...the battle is the Lord's... (1 Samuel 17:45-47)

David's weakness wasn't his focus. He knew where his power came from, and that victory didn't depend on him.

In Saul we see a stark contrast to David's perspective, faith, and confidence. The writer of 1 Samuel makes it very clear that “on hearing the Philistine's [challenge], Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified,” (1 Samuel 17:11). The king of Israel, who we know stood “a head taller than any of the others,” is the natural choice for the champion of his people. But instead, we find him cowering in his tent, more than willing to hand over his armor to David so that he might fight the battle. Rather than seeing



Goliath for what he was, a man defying the Lord; rather than remembering the salvation God worked for His people, especially through the weak things of the world; rather than depending on God to defend His honor and protect His people; Saul has turned from the Lord, even as He turned from him. Saul was right, he could not have won the battle, but neither could David, unless the Lord gave it into his hand.

Do you look at situations through God-tinted glasses, asking for His perspective? Or do you allow the perceptions of those around you, or your own vision, to justify cowardice? Remembering, not only the promises of God, but also His past successes, is key to becoming a man who shows up when he is needed that he may serve. Approach the battle in light of God's strength and character. When God calls you into something, He will give you the ability to do it (Philippians 2:13). So, fear not and walk boldly into difficult and impossible situations that you may serve God, for His glory and for the good of His people.

Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 17:2-4, 8-16, 20-51

Text Questions

1. Compare Goliath's armor and weapons with David's. What pieces are listed? What were their typical purposes?
2. What were the terms of Goliath's challenge?
3. Why did David call Goliath an "uncircumcised Philistine?" What did this title signify? *Hint: Circumcision was a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham, promising to make him a great nation and sealing his descendants as God's people. Goliath wasn't circumcised so he was not a partaker in the covenant and represented a threat to God's people and an enemy of God.*
4. Look at all the times David speaks in this chapter. How many times does he mention God and what does he say about Him?

Application Questions

1. The first quality we discussed that enabled David to volunteer in the Lord's service was divine perception. That is, God gave him insight into the situation. Is there a situation in your life that seems overwhelming in which you need divine insight? If you are comfortable, share with the group so that we can look at God's perspective together.
2. The second quality we talked about was zeal for God and David's assurance of God's goodness and faithfulness. He had a good memory for God's successes. Do you? Talk about a time when the Lord worked on your behalf to help you with an impossible obstacle.
3. Do you get upset when someone defames the name of Jesus? Or do you let it pass and stay silent like Saul? Are you willing to stand up for the honor of your God? How can you speak truth in love in this kind of situation? When are you called to act?
4. The third quality David possessed was confidence that his God was the key to the victory. Do you believe that God is for you and not against you? What effect would this kind of confidence have in your daily interaction with friends, classmates, professors, etc.? What effect would it have in situations that seem insurmountable?
5. Are you willing to serve even when the odds are not in your favor? Do you go out of your way to serve? Why or why not? How can we support you, as a small group, as you grow in seeing things from God's perspective, faith in God's goodness and faithfulness, and confidence that the battle is the Lord's?



Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 17:47, "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."
2. This week, re-read 1 Samuel 17 and read 1 Samuel 18.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on 1 Samuel 17-18.
 - a. What were some of the external obstacles David faced when he hinted at and then declared his intentions to face Goliath?
 - b. What are some of the internal obstacles he might have faced?
 - c. Chapter 18 is all about the aftermath of David's willingness to serve, what are some of the triumphs and some of the (probably unexpected) anguishes that David dealt with after the Lord gave Goliath into his hand?





Week Seven: Duty

“He said to his men, ‘The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.’” 1 Samuel 24:6

Duty, outside of a military context, seems to be a word of the past. We should not be surprised by the decline of a sense of duty when the ideas of moral relativism prevail in our society. Duty is one’s sense of moral obligation or responsibility. If there are no absolute standards being observed by the culture, then a sense of duty is, at best, individualized, and, at worst, considered entirely unnecessary and outmoded.

For godly men, however, duty is not optional, but rather flows out of respect and reverence for our highest authority, God Himself. David admirably demonstrates the heart behind fulfilling one’s duty when he is faced, not once, but twice, with the opportunity to avenge himself by taking Saul’s life. Revenge is a subtle temptation, seemingly appealing to one’s sense of justice. In reality, though, it is a temptation to usurp God’s authority by taking matters into one’s own hands. God makes it very clear how He feels about revenge in Deuteronomy and then later in Paul’s letter to the Romans: “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord,” (Deuteronomy 32:35, Romans 12:19).

David is hiding in the wilderness with his 600 men and Saul is pursuing him with “three thousand able young men,” when Saul is required to stop to answer the Call of Nature (1 Samuel 24:2). As the Lord would have it, Saul stops off in the very cave where David and his men are hiding. It seems like the perfect opportunity for David to take control and realize his God-given destiny. His men encourage him to act quickly and decisively, saying, “This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish,’” (1 Samuel 24:4). Interestingly, we do not find evidence of that word ever being given by the Lord elsewhere in the accounts of David’s life (*New American Commentary*). The men are giving David every reason to justify what he probably wants to do: finally get back at the man who has made his life nearly unlivable.

David’s response in the moment is surprising. He does sneak up on Saul, but rather than killing or even wounding him, he cuts off the corner of his robe. In our modern perspective, this action doesn’t seem like a big deal, so we are confused when the word says David was conscience-stricken because of his action. When we dig a little deeper, we learn that “this act was far from meaningless because David’s confiscation of a portion of the royal robe signified the transfer of power from the house of Saul to the house of David....By voiding Saul’s claim to kingship, he was at some level lifting his hand against ‘the anointed of the Lord.’ This was more than an act against the king; it was rebellion against the Lord... who had previously punished Israelites who had expressed a rebellious attitude against constituted authority” (*New American Commentary*).

Although David recognizes that it is his moral obligation, his duty, not to kill King Saul, he has succumbed to temptation by symbolically taking matters into his own hands. He repents and persuades his men not to sin against Saul themselves and ends with an eloquent acknowledgement of Saul’s position, renewed respect, and a passionate plea for reconciliation. Saul also acknowledges his own guilt, but true reconciliation is no longer feasible because of Saul’s unpredictable favor and lack of commitment to God.



Only two chapters later, in 1 Samuel 26, we see David placed in a very similar situation. He is able to enter the camp of Saul undetected with the help of the Lord who put Saul and his men into a “deep sleep” (1 Samuel 26:12). Again, the companion David brought with him makes a convincing case for justifying any vengeful motives David might have. Abishai says, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands” and even offers to kill Saul himself (1 Samuel 26:8). But David refuses to allow his emotions and his desire for revenge to conquer his reverence for God and his desire to walk righteously before Him. He rebukes Abishai and only allows him to take Saul’s spear and water jug as a token of their presence (and restraint). David’s actions corroborate his belief that “only God Himself has the right to take the life of ...a divinely sanctioned leader,” (*NIV Application Commentary*).

In a world of relative morals and situational ethics, the idea of moral obligation or responsibility, particularly toward and unrighteous and unjust authority, seems laughable. However, God clearly commands his people to “be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which [He] has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God,” (Romans 13:1). Therefore, we have the moral obligation, the responsibility, the duty, as men, to respect authority, whether it be on a state, national, local, or pastoral level. This respect does not mean passivity. David did not simply allow Saul to kill him, nor did he give up on God’s promises. He spent time with the Lord, actively waiting and seeking His guidance, he trained his men both in warfare and in godly character, he prepared to fill the office for which God had appointed him, but he refused to take matters into his own hands, give in to the temptation to take revenge, and violate God’s law. He was a man who did his duty and, in the end, God rewarded him for his faithfulness.

Scripture reading

1 Samuel 24

Text Questions

1. Look at David’s companions in 1 Samuel 24 and 26. What was their approach to God’s command to respect and be subject to authority?
2. What was David’s response immediately after cutting a corner from Saul’s robe? Why do you think he reacted this way? How does this demonstrate his relationship with the Holy Spirit (John 16:8)?
3. In both chapters, Saul recognizes his own sin. What is the difference between Saul’s response to his sin and David’s response to his own sin? *Hint: David’s response is marked by a change in behavior, i.e. prostrating himself before Saul and calling him “my lord” and “my king.” Saul, as we see in chapter 26 does not change his behavior, therefore, he is not truly repentant of his jealousy and hatred toward David.*
4. What does Saul prophesy about David?

Application Questions

1. When do you find it most challenging to respect authority? Read Romans 13:1-2. Does this change your perspective on those you find difficult to respect? How will knowing that God institutes every authority change your response?



2. In what areas in your life is God calling you to take responsibility or fulfill a moral obligation? How would that situation be affected if doing your duty was motivated by your respect and love for God?
3. Do you have friends that help you justify actions that satisfy your fleshly desires? What does this passage imply about the need to withstand peer pressure? How could David have justified taking action against Saul? Does God view sin comparatively? Why or why not? *Hint: David was still conscience-stricken when he only cut off the corner of Saul's robe. He realized that that symbolic act was no less an act of rebellion against God than if he had actually struck Saul down. He also could have justified his actions by considering how much suffering Saul had caused him, but he refused to compare offenses.*
4. How did David refuse to justify sinful impulses? In what ways can you take a stand and refuse to give into temptation? How can we help you to take that stand?
5. What is your absolute standard for right and wrong? How can you guard against letting moral relativism influence?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: Romans 13:1, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."
2. This week read 1 Samuel 24-26.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on 1 Samuel 24-26.
 - a. What kind of justification did David's men give him for acting vengefully in chapter 24? Why is it significant that we never find this prophecy (at least applied to Saul) in Scripture?
 - b. How might the situation in chapter 25 have increased David's confidence in God's vindication and perfect timing?
 - c. What was the result of David's confidence in the Lord in chapter 26 as compared with the events of chapter 24?





Week Eight: Loyalty

"Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own." 2 Samuel 12:10

Even though David repented of the sin he committed with Bathsheba against the Lord, as we studied in Week Four, and was forgiven in the eyes of God and man, the consequences of his choice continued to surface in his life. We see the repercussions most clearly in 2 Samuel 13 through 19: the loss of loyalty and eventual death of his beloved son Absalom.

David had many sons: "Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; his second, Kileab the son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; the third, Absalom the son of Maakah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream the son of David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron" (2 Samuel 3:2-5).

Over time, his first son Amnon fell in love with his sister Tamar whose brother was Absalom. He raped Tamar and hence ruined her life and future. David responds emotionally, with fury but with a marked lack of action. After two years of waiting to see if David would punish Amnon for what he did to his sister Tamar, Absalom takes matters into his own hands and devises a plan to murder Amnon. His plan moves forward with success and he and his friends kill his brother. David grieves deeply over the loss of Amnon and Absalom flees to Geshur for three years until he is summoned by David to come back to Jerusalem. At this point, Absalom's heart was cold. He bowed before David and David kissed him, but it is obvious from the lack of relationship that followed that it was just a formal gesture, signifying nothing.

David had lost Absalom's heart and loyalty through his lack of action and refusal to execute justice or actively extend mercy. As the chapters proceed, Absalom spends day after day winning the hearts of the people of Israel and setting himself up to overthrow his own father's throne. He is successful and is declared king in Hebron, collects an army, and marches straight to Jerusalem to kill his father and usurp his position. David flees for his life and, despite his son's betrayal, we see great loyalty from David's closest friends and his warriors. Person after person takes steps to protect David, provide for him, and save his life from Absalom. Absalom enters a war with his father's army and is killed. David is left with another dead son and more grief and heartache.

So what happened here? How could Absalom believe it was right to kill his father and take the throne way before his time? How could Absalom think he could conquer David's army? Beth Moore said, "David had never asked for forgiveness. He had never taken his rightful place of authority over family events. David made plenty of mistakes, but Absalom did not have to follow suit. He could have called on the mercy of God and forgiven David for failing him, even if his father never admitted how wrongly he handled his family. God would have held David responsible, and Absalom would have been free. Instead, he locked himself in the prison of bitterness where character eroded in the darkness of his soul." God is faithful. He would have called David out again for not dealing with Amnon through his Prophets. Absalom was impatient, prideful, and angry; a bad combination that ultimately compromised his loyalty to God and his father.



2 Chronicles 16:9 states, “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” “Fully committed” and “loyal” are used interchangeably here. Bob Sorge said, “God is looking for loyalty because it is a God-quality. It’s a divine attribute that pulsates at the very core of the everlasting Trinity; defining the very personality of God...loyalty means...I reserve my affections for Him only. Second, it means that I look to Him alone as the source of my salvation and deliverance and help.” God is looking for people on the earth who are fully committed and loyal to Him. Absalom was committed neither to David nor God. Instead, he chose his own agenda, on his own time, and did not go to God for his help and source of salvation.

Our loyalty will be tested in this life, to God and to the leaders God has put in our life. Saul and David were not perfect, but David had a loyal heart both toward God and toward Saul. David was anointed king, but he waited on God’s timing to make it happen. He did not try to purposefully win hearts and steal Saul’s throne. God gave him favor and the hearts of the people in His perfect timing. As a result, David was seasoned by character building trials and tests. When God gave him the throne, he was so fruitful, God chose to birth his own Son from his line. “Absalom had a cynical view of his father’s agenda. He never believed that his father loved him enough to do right by him. So he concluded that if he was going to get his rightful due, he would have to wrest it himself from his father’s hand” (Bob Sorge). As men, we often question God’s love for us when he is building our character and forming us into “kings.” We must believe we are loved and that God disciplines those he loves to make them the best they can be.

Every leader has to be led. As leaders we are led by God and others. It is often hard to submit to the authority God has placed in our life, especially if that authority has failed or hurt us. We must recognize that just because our leader is not perfect, our calling to serve under them or wait on God for their removal is not negated. It is important to link yourself as a man of God with “Davids”: men and women whose hearts are totally committed to God and glorifying Him. These Davids will be used to strengthen your character and your loyalty to God and others. Do not link yourself with “Absaloms”: men and women who do not want to wait on God for his timing to bring forth their destiny and calling. Perhaps even more importantly, don’t become an Absalom, allowing your anger, hurt, or bitterness from the past erode your loyalty. God will vindicate you as He did David. Wait for it.

Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 13:23-39

2 Samuel 14:21-33

2 Samuel 15:1-16

Text Questions

1. In 2 Samuel 13, Absalom tells his friends to be “brave and strong.” How does Absalom’s appeal to their pride similar to that of Satan’s temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4?
2. Looking at 2 Samuel 13 and 14, in what ways did David’s reaction to Amnon’s death create more bitterness and anger in Absalom?
3. What were some of the steps Absalom took in Chapter 15 to begin to overthrow David’s throne?
4. Do you think God would have spared David having more pain and heartache in his family had David dealt appropriately with Amnon and Absalom? Why or why not?
5. Read Luke 15:11-32 and 2 Samuel 14:33 compare and contrast the two sons (Absalom and Prodigal) and the two fathers (Father and David)? Now read 2 Samuel 18:31-33. Absalom is



dead; in what ways does David's heart towards his son seem to have shifted? (*Hint: David shows true regret and grief over the loss of his son. He demonstrates a father's heart, just a little too late. It reveals that David had already shown mercy on Absalom, was longing for reconciliation, and had a father's heart that wanted to be restored to his son.*)

Application Questions

1. How would you describe loyalty? How has God demonstrated His loyal or fully committed heart towards you? How has a friend or leader demonstrated loyalty towards you?
2. Can you share a time in your life when your loyalty toward God or in an important relationship was tested?
3. Why do you think David did not control his family tragedy and take action with Amnon in the first place? Satan often uses sin and failure against us so that even after we sincerely repent we remain inactive. "Two wrongs don't make a right...restoration does not mean you can no longer stand for the truth because you fell. Restoration means you must stand." Have you experienced this lately and in what ways can you take a stand against the enemy and confront the situations that are facing you or your friends with truth and love?
4. What were some of the strategies and tactics the devil used to stir up disloyalty and betrayal in Absalom? In what ways can we combat the lies of the enemy when tempted to be disloyal to our leaders or friends?
5. Absalom started out with sincere intentions to help his sister then got entangled with bitterness and unforgiveness ending in his dismay after 11 years. Have you experienced a time of unforgiveness in your life towards a loved one? What does the Bible have to say about unforgiveness? How have you since dealt with your unforgiveness and received healing? Do you need more healing in this area and how can the small group help stand with you in this?
6. After reading the story of the prodigal son and hearing David's lamenting words over his imperfect son Absalom, how does this help you understand your Heavenly Father a little more when it comes to you as His son? How do you feel like you have grown in your understanding of the "Father's heart" in the past few years or weeks?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Scripture Memory: Psalm 3:3-4 "But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain."
2. Read 2 Samuel Chapters 13-19 and Psalm 3.
3. Meet with your partner this week to discuss the readings and pray.
 - a. What becomes of Absalom and do you view David's reaction as right, wrong, or both (if possible)?
 - b. Shimei curses David and throws stones on him and his men when he flees for his life. How does David's reaction impact you? Later, Shimei apologizes. What do you think about David's reaction to his apology?
 - c. How does David's dependency on God through these chapters strengthen you in dealing with your own family?
 - d. In Psalm 3, David is surprised to even wake, his heart hurts so bad and his life was fiercely on the line. Is there a verse in this Psalm that you can relate to and why?





Week Nine: Sacrifice

“But King David replied to Araunah, ‘No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing.’” 1 Chronicles 21:24

In 1 Chronicles 21, David finds himself in the midst of a pain-filled situation after stumbling once again. David has decided to take a census of the fighting men. Although we don't find direct evidence of a command against counting the people in the Torah, the problem may have been “either David's motivation for the census or the manner in which it was carried out” (*New American Commentary*). He might have wanted to know the number of fighting men he commanded to feed his pride and increase self-reliant confidence or he might have neglected the Torah's injunction to pay a half-shekel ransom for each enrolled male (Exodus 30:12). Either way, we know that Joab, the commander, protested strongly, asking David, “Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?” (1 Chronicles 21:3). And later we read, “this command was also evil in the sight of God...” (1 Chronicles 21:7).

This time, however, a prophet did not need to come and call David to account. “David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the LORD, ‘I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing,’” (2 Samuel 24:10). David recognized his own guilt and confessed it to the Lord, begging for mercy and repenting of the attitude of his heart. While repentance negates the necessary spiritual consequences of sin (rather than allowing us to remain separated we are reconciled to God), it does not often negate natural consequences. David faced an excruciating decision. Nonetheless, he chose wisely, knowing God's mercy is very great, and far better than leaving himself and his people to the judgment of men (1 Chronicles 21:13).

The Lord then sent an angel to execute this judgment resulting in the deaths of 70,000 men. David is devastated by the horrible consequences of his disobedience and pleads with God, saying:

Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people. (1 Chronicles 21:17)

He humbly intercedes on behalf of the people and declares his willingness to sacrifice greatly on their behalf. He displays God's shepherd heart - brokenhearted by the suffering and peril his sheep are facing. The word of the Lord comes almost immediately to David through the prophet Gad, instructing him to build an altar where the destroying angel stopped, at the threshing floor of Araunah. His love for God, his renewed desire to obey, and his love for the people prompted him to act quickly regardless of the cost, to do what could be done to spare the lives of his “sheep.”

The mount where Araunah's threshing floor stood is significant in Israel's sacrificial history. It was on this same mount that Abraham went to offer his son, Isaac, in obedience to the Lord's command; it is here that David's son, Solomon, will build the great temple to the Lord, where sacrifices will be made to atone for the sins of the people; and it is symbolic of that hill outside Jerusalem where our Savior was crucified as the ransom for us to become sons of God. But at this moment, David has been commanded to build an



altar, so he immediately goes and seeks to purchase the designated land so that he may obey. Araunah offers him everything he needs, free of charge. But David recognizes the necessity of value in sacrifice. He realizes that if the altar and the offering aren't worth something to him, they won't be worth anything to God either. Merriam-Webster defines sacrifice as "an act of offering to a deity something precious, [or] destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else." David rejected the easy way out, understanding that a "free" offering is not a true sacrifice.

The most well-beloved heroes always sacrifice something precious to accomplish their quest, to serve, and to protect those they love: their time, their comfort, their bodies, or even their lives. Nothing valuable can be gained without sacrifice. Jesus, likewise, knew there was no easy way out to reconcile you to Himself and guarantee your adoption as a son, so he didn't look for one. He voluntarily surrendered His heavenly wealth, the acknowledgement of His deity, and even His life to spare the lives of His sheep. Obedience to God is characterized by sacrifice; to be like Jesus it must be embraced rather than avoided. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," (1 John 3:16, John 15:13).

The question, then, is what does sacrifice look like for you today? How can you be a man who is unwilling to offer God something which costs you nothing? Paul and the writer of Hebrews give us some direction in this. In Romans 12:1, Paul beseeches the brothers to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God – laying down their pride, their ambitions, and their rights to accomplish what God had for them to do. He says this is our "spiritual act of worship." The literal translation says this is our service to God – just as the priests performed service before God in the tabernacle and temple – it is God-ordained worship, or the service God desires. Likewise, in Hebrews 13:15-16, we are exhorted to "continually offer a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Because of Christ's sacrifice, our thankful hearts and renewed minds should rejoice in the opportunity to sacrifice our time, energy, and resources to rescue the lost through making Him known.

Scripture Reading

1 Chronicles 21:1-28

Isaiah 53:3-12

Text Questions:

1. Identify at least two places in the first five verses of 1 Chronicles 1 where the crisis about to occur could have been averted. What leadership qualities that we have discussed did David not exercise in this instance?
2. Why do you think God was displeased with what David did? *Hint: David might have been acting in pride or relying on the strength of his numbers rather than the strength God provides.*
3. What does Araunah offer David when the king comes to purchase his land? Why did David respond the way he did?
4. List some of the ways Isaiah describes Christ in chapter 53. How is He pictured as the suffering servant? What does this mean?

Application Questions



1. Have you ever done something that you didn't see as wrong with the wrong motive behind it? Were you conscience-stricken, or did someone have to call you out? How did you respond to the correction?
2. Sin demands a sacrifice. The Israelites knew this and it was in their culture. Since God paid for your rebellion by sacrificing His Son, how might bearing that fact in mind affect your decisions?
3. Have you ever made a mistake or deliberately disobeyed the Lord, resulting in suffering for someone you love? How did that make you feel? Was there anything you could do to reverse or lessen the pain?
4. Being a man of God means a calling to be like Christ. What attitudes or actions are required by that call?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. In what ways are love and sacrifice related? How is Christ calling you to sacrifice on behalf of others?
6. Both David's and Christ's sacrifices cost them dearly, but they counted the cost and considered it worth it for the people they loved. Have you been looking for an "easy way out" or are you willing to do the hard thing and give up what is precious to you? Time, comfort, dreams, etc. How will your approach to loving others change after this study? How can we, as a small group, help you stay accountable to your commitment?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 John 3:16, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."
2. This week, read 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21.
 - a. How could David have averted this crisis in the first place? Read Proverbs 15:22.
 - b. Look at the contrast between David's distress in 1 Chronicles 21 and Jesus' suffering in Isaiah 53. What was the result of each?
 - c. Where have you been called to sacrifice for the sake of others? Are you willing to sacrifice something that is valuable to you or have you been looking for the "easy way out?"





Week Ten: Legacy

"He brought me to a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me." 2 Samuel 22:20

"Some lives are so significant in courageous accomplishment that they form the beginning of an era. Others bring with their death the end of an era. Their thinking, their creative ideas, their magnificent model leave a veritable chasm across life's landscape...The death of David, the greatest king Israel ever had, marked the end of an era, the closing out of a period of time on earth that could never be duplicated" (Charles Swindoll). David established the vast nation of Israel, conquered the Philistines, was a magnificent writer and musician, gathered stone, iron, brass, and cedar for the building of the temple, and in essence, closed the most successful royal career recorded in the annals of history.

The apostle Paul makes a profound statement about David's life in Acts 13:36: "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay." David found that special, God-ordained reason for serving his generation. He served as king and perpetuated righteousness in Israel. In 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 we encounter a record of the end of his life and his last recorded words. After four decades as king, he reflected on his unfulfilled desire to build the temple, commissioned Solomon to carry the plan forward and serve as the next King, prayed, and rejoiced with the assembly of Israel.

David reminds the assembly that although Solomon is young and inexperienced, God had chosen him to be King. The prophet Nathan, the priest Zadok, and the warrior Benaiah were chosen to confirm Solomon as king before the people. What a commanding picture of the very heart and life David lived: prophet, priest, warrior, and king. David commissioned Solomon with these places of authority in mind, having each of these men bless him.

David, in his commission to Solomon, admonished him to acknowledge God and to serve Him with wholehearted devotion and a willing mind. The Hebrew word for wholehearted is *shalem* and is used in other scriptures in reference to, "unhewn, untouched stones". So to serve God with a *shalem* heart, in this context, meant to serve with an undivided or uncut heart. "A divided heart places our entire lives in jeopardy. Only God can be totally trusted with our hearts. He doesn't demand our complete devotion to feed his ego but to provide for our safety. God uses an undivided heart to keep us out of trouble" (Beth Moore). David did not want Solomon to make the same mistakes he did. He wanted his heart undivided and wanted Solomon to live with that peace and protection.

The Hebrew term for willing, in the words of David to Solomon, is *chaphets*, which transliterates to take delight in, be pleased with, have affection for, or to choose. David wanted Solomon to serve God and honor him because he desired to. As men, God wants us to love Him because we choose to and because we delight in Him. David said God delivered him because he delighted in him, but it is clear to see, David served God, because he delighted in Him! God does not want forced affection and acts of service that are not rooted in love. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13 that we can do many great things in the name of the Lord but if we do not do them for love, and through love, those works are meaningless. Unending love remains the true hallmark of David's life. David was a man in love with His God. David had everything but was never consumed with greed; he was undone with adoration for God and His heart for Israel.



“Thank you, David, for being our model, teaching us by your life such significant truths. And thank you, Father, for being our Master; using us though we are weak, forgiving us when we fail, and loving us through all the Sauls and Goliaths and Jonathans and Abigails and Bathshebas and Absaloms and Joabs and Solomons of our lives. Thank you for showing us that we can be people like David...people of passion and destiny” (Charles Swindoll).

So may we, as men, return to our first love and the simplicity of the Gospel. Let us think upon David's early years as a young shepherd boy singing to God in the fields. David was truly a king, a priest, a prophet, and a warrior long before his life ended. He was chosen for his heart, a heart ablaze, that burned, and that never stopped beating for God. As we end our study, may we receive David's commission to Solomon and acknowledge God and serve him wholeheartedly and with a willing mind. May we do this with such a fierce steadfastness that our lives will leave a legacy that inspires others to be people of passion and destiny as well.

Scripture Reading

1 Chronicles 28:1-21
1 Chronicles 29:10-24
1 Kings 2:2-4

Text Questions

1. Read 1 Chronicles 28:2-3, what was David's unfulfilled desire and why was this desire unfulfilled? What was his reaction to God's "no" as you reflect on the overall chapter?
2. Read 1 Chronicles 28 8-9, 20 and 1 Kings 2:2-3. List all the different commissions and words of encouragement David gave to Solomon.
3. In 1 Chronicles 29:10-16, what did David continue to restate to God in these verses and how do these scriptures show his proper scale of values when it came to all that he had? (*Hint: David acknowledged to God over and over that everything he had came from Him, a powerful statement coming from one of the wealthiest men of his time*).
4. What part of David's prayer for his people in 1 Chronicles 29:17-20 sticks out to you the most and why?
5. What did the people do in response to David's prayer? What do you think David felt in those final moments of his life watching his kingdom rejoicing, bowing to God, and celebrating his years and the coming of a new king?

Application Questions

1. David wanted to build a temple for the Lord but God said no. Have you ever experienced an unfulfilled dream or desire in which God said no to you too? What was your reaction to His "no"? In what ways does David's acceptance of God's "no" to his greatest dream and his thankfulness for what he did with his life encourage you today?
2. "Spiritual living does not come naturally - sin does. The first step to victory is acknowledging the authority of God in our lives" (Beth Moore). In what ways do you acknowledge God's authority in your life? How is He moving in your life?



3. Read Psalm 86:11. Here David asks God to give him an undivided heart that fears God. What do you think it means to “fear the Lord?” Do you have a healthy fear of the Lord and has this made a difference in the choices you make day to day?
4. David was a man who was not tied to material things even though he had so much. Do you struggle with materialism or being greedy? What are some ways you can take steps to overcome this struggle?
5. Read Joshua 1:7-9. How is David’s commission to Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:20 similar to that of Joshua’s commission to his people? As men we need strength and courage. How have you grown in these two traits by studying David’s life?
6. David was a man who fulfilled his God-given destiny for his generation. Has the Holy Spirit given you an idea of what your God-ordained destiny involves here at your school and beyond? Are you taking the spiritual and practical steps to achieve that? How can our group aid you in this?
7. Now that this study is over, please name the greatest thing that God has shown you over these past weeks. How has David’s life inspired you to become a man of passion and destiny?

Prayer Partners Assignment

1. Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 28:9, “And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.”
2. This week, read 2 Samuel 22-24, 1 Kings 1 and 2, Psalm 71.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on this week’s reading.
 - a. In 2 Samuel 22 and 23, David records a psalm of deliverance and sings a song. What verses of the psalm and song stand out to you the most and why?
 - b. What did David do in chapter 24 that was displeasing to God and what was the result of his disobedience?
 - c. What events unfold in 1 Kings 1 and 2 to bring about the crowning of a new king?
 - d. Most scholars agree Psalm 71 was written by David in his old age. What would David always have that no one could take away from him?





Seven Practical Commitments Purity Covenant

Adapted from Mikebickle.org

"Confess your trespasses to one another...that you may be healed." (James 5:16)

Commitment #1: I commit to refuse to participate in conversations that promote or joke about immorality. If I do speak in this way, I will confess to those I was conversing with that I sinned.

Commitment #2: I commit to confess to the same trusted friend (who embraces this covenant) each time I view pornography or have any sexual contact with someone who is not my spouse.

Commitment #3: If asked to hold my friend accountable, I commit to be a faithful friend. I will not shy back or be forgetful about asking my brother how he is doing in his area of personal struggle. I commit to ask the hard questions, and to do so faithfully, at least once a week, for the next six months.

Commitment #4: I commit to register with the technology of my choice that promotes the wisdom and safety of accountability whether or not I struggle with pornography.

- Accountability Software: These programs track your internet activity and send an email to the accountability partner that you choose. If you uninstall the software it triggers a report to your partner. See www.covenanteyes.com (\$2.50 per month); www.x3watch.com (Free); www.integrity.com (free); www.accountable2you.com (free).
- Web Filtering Software: Programs that block sexual content including pornography, gambling, violence: www.integrity.com (\$49.95); www.bsafefhome.com (\$49.95); www.intego.com (for Macs); www.cyberpatrol.com (\$39.95).

Commitment #5: I commit to hold any confession of my friend's failures in strict confidence. If I do speak it to another then I commit to tell the one who confessed their sin to me of this breach.

Commitment #6: If I repeatedly stumble in immorality, I will show the fruit of repentance by going with my friend to confess to a leader and then accept the boundaries they give me.

Commitment #7: I commit to share with the leadership if my friend repeatedly stumbles in immorality. I will first tell my friend before sharing with a leader to convince him to go with me. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. If he will not hear, take with you one or two more... If he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church." (Matthew 18:15-17)

I am taking a step of faith and signing this form knowing that it is only by God's grace, and my cooperation with that grace, that this will be possible. I am standing again, standing now, and I am excited to commit the next six months to intentionally protecting my sexual purity, knowing He is more than able to help me with this. My relationship with God, myself, and others are worth it!

Signed: _____

Date: _____

