

# 1 SAMUEL

## The Coming King



A Devotional Bible Study  
by Sue LeBoutillier

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## ❧ *1 Samuel — The Coming King* ❧ *Part One*

God's plan of redemption is a story that begins in the Old Testament, and always points us to Jesus Christ — our Messiah — in the New Testament. It's an incredible journey! As the story unfolds, we find fascinating people, who all play an intricate role in pointing us to our *real King*!

In this book — 1 Samuel — we'll follow the lives of a desperate barren woman; an aged priest; a child who lived like an orphan; a tall, dark and handsome farmer with lost donkeys; and a fearless and ruddy shepherd boy.

None of those people could have guessed that God would weave them into the intricate tapestry of His story of redemption; but each of them played a significant role. As we observe how these people responded to God and how He used them in His Story, we'll learn valuable lessons that can build our faith, and make *us* more useful in God's Kingdom as well!

Why is our study called, *The Coming King*? Well, first of all, there will be two kings who will come to Israel in the span of these chapters. Both of these kings will fight for Israel and defend her against her enemies, in the same way the Judges of Israel did. But, if we are careful students, we'll realize that, throughout all of the pages, there is an underlying current always begging us to look farther ahead to the *real King* of Israel — Jesus Christ!

Because *prophets, priests and kings* are by nature leaders, and because our study will focus on the lives and ministry of Samuel, Saul, and David, there will be abundant lessons about leadership.

If you are a leader in *any capacity* — like a mother, an employer, a teacher, a ministry leader — you will find these chapters filled with thought-provoking questions. And I know that, as you ponder these lessons, the Holy Spirit will lead you and add to your understanding, so that you can lead in His strength and wisdom!

This will be a verse-by-verse Bible study in a five-day-a-week format. Part One will cover **Chapters 1-15**; and Part Two will finish the study with **Chapters 16-31**. You and your group can take a short break between the two parts, or just move straight through.

This study guide is intended to be completed independently, **before** you attend a group or watch/listen to the teaching. (Except for the first week, which has space for you to take notes, while you watch/listen to the **Introduction**.)

If you're meeting with a friend or small group, the ideal method would be to study the Scriptures on your own first, then watch/listen to the teaching (privately or in your group), then discuss the week's lesson, and pray together about applying the passages to your lives.

May the Lord richly bless you as you study His Word!

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To watch the video teachings for this Bible Study go to:  
[ccontario.com/womens-studies](http://ccontario.com/womens-studies)  
or  
[YouTube.com/calvarychapelontario](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvYUwUwUwUwUwUwUwUwUwUw)

The best translation of the Bible to use is the one you understand best, and using more than one translation can be a useful aid in your study! This study guide was created using the ESV (English Standard Version).



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## Week One — Introduction

Use this page as you listen to the Week One teaching video.

([www.ccontario.com/wow-1Samuel](http://www.ccontario.com/wow-1Samuel))

If you're studying in a group, the questions on the following page may provide some good discussion starters following the video.

1 Samuel is a continuation of

God's \_\_\_\_\_ story of \_\_\_\_\_.

In the days of Joshua, Israel had enjoyed a season of \_\_\_\_\_.

In the days when the judges ruled, the nation fell into \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Samuel ushers in the advent of \_\_\_\_\_.

Samuel was the last Judge of Israel, born around \_\_\_\_\_.

Nine characters to note in the Book of 1 Samuel:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A judge, prophet and king-maker
- \_\_\_\_\_ The people's king
- \_\_\_\_\_ God's king
- \_\_\_\_\_ A childless woman used by God
- \_\_\_\_\_ A good priest with bad sons
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saul's son and David's loyal friend
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saul's daughter who became David's wife
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nabal's wife who became David's wife
- \_\_\_\_\_ David's priest

For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself.

1 Samuel 12:22

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Name two characters, from the previous page, whom you're looking forward to studying the most.
2. Polygamy is mentioned here, without comment as to morality, but with all the resulting tension. What conclusion do you suppose the reader is to draw regarding this practice?
3. Was it a great injustice that Peninnah had many children, while tender-hearted Hannah had none? How can a seeming injustice actually work to build Godly character in a person's life?
4. Elkanah seemed to want to bless Hannah, but his words and actions were awkward, and may have hurt more than helped. How can a Christian graciously receive the well-intended remarks of people, even when they are not exactly helpful?
5. It can be difficult to truly understand another person's grief. Discuss some ways to support a friend through either sudden tragedy or ongoing difficulties in life.
6. Hannah willingly consecrated to the Lord something extremely precious to her. In what way does this inspire you?





# Map





## Week Two — 1 Samuel Chapters 2-3

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The Book of 1 Samuel opens with ordinary people struggling with ordinary problems. Chapter one reminded us that the Lord is always seeking to work powerfully on behalf of those who are powerless, and who look to Him for their solutions! That's exactly what Hannah did — she reached out to the Lord for a solution to her heartache.

When it comes to fresh inspiration for our prayer life, there are few women in the Bible who get the job done better than Hannah. Her determination to *pour out her heart before the Lord*, in the midst of her pain, is admirable. But even after chapter one, we're not quite finished letting her words influence us. Hannah was not a woman who quickly forgot God's work. As we study chapter two, we're plunged directly into the overflowing song of her heart, as she rejoiced in what God had done for *her* and for *His people!*

### *Day 1:*

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#### 🌀 READ 1 Samuel 2:1-11 — Hannah Prayed with Rejoicing

- What similarity do you notice in the opening and ending sentences of Hannah's prayer, which make them almost seem like bookends?
  
- List some of the characteristics of God in her prayer:  
*i.e., He is like a rock*



- From the last sentence of chapter one and from **v.11**, describe what Samuel was doing with Eli, even as a young boy:

## *Day 2:*

### READ 1 Samuel 2:12-26 — Eli's Worthless Sons

Our narrative moves quickly from the bravery of a mother, leaving her son to worship in the presence of the Lord; to the heartache of a father, whose sons behaved scandalously in the presence of the Lord.

- How were Eli's sons described in **v.12**?
- Compare that with Samuel's actions, as described in yesterday's reading:
- According to **v.17**, what was the heart of the problem that caused Eli's sons to act as they did, while they served as priests?

- It almost seemed like Hannah had Hophni and Phineas in mind, during some stanzas of her prayer. Write a phrase or two from her prayer that seemed to describe people like those two:

- What did Hannah bring to Samuel each year, when the family came for the yearly sacrifice?

*And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.* 2:21

- In addition to God's blessing on Hannah to conceive the child Samuel, but how was she further blessed after she turned Samuel over to the service of the Lord?

One last thought about Hophni and Phineas — at this point in the story, their corrupt ways had become so fixed, and they were so sure their way of life would continue without consequence, that they shrugged off all warnings. Even their father, from whom the priesthood had come in the first place, could not seem to influence them! It's no wonder that God determined an end to their delusion. God would not be mocked!

*I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind.* 2:35



- Read **1 Timothy 5:22b**, and comment on Eli's failure:

Parents need to be willing to honestly observe their children's lives, explain right and wrong, expect obedience, and be willing to carry out discipline when bad behavior necessitates.

Read these **Proverbs** and note what inspires you, particularly in light of what we've just read about the outcome of Eli's family:

- **Proverbs 3:12**
- **Proverbs 5:21-23**
- **Proverbs 6:23**
- **Proverbs 29:17**

And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. <sup>3:20</sup>

## *Day 4:* \_\_\_\_\_

### **READ 1 Samuel 3:1-9 — The Lord Called Samuel**

God was clearly setting the stage for *His work* with Israel. He was putting *His people* in the places *He planned*. In this chapter, the spotlight shifts from Hannah and Eli, to the boy Samuel.

Let's review what we've read about Samuel:

- **2:11** ...the boy \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord...
- **2:21** ...the boy Samuel \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of the Lord.

But, at this stage in **3:7**, it tells us that

- ...Samuel did not yet \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord had not yet been \_\_\_\_\_ to him.

But he was about to get to know both the Lord and His voice!

- What phenomenon was *rare* in those days (**v.1**)?
- Describe where Eli and Samuel spent their nights (**v.2-3**):
- Why do you think Samuel ran to Eli when he heard a voice?
- Who was the one who recognized it was the Lord speaking?
- Do you find the above answer surprising, knowing that God had already brought judgment to Eli in the previous chapter?

## Day 5: \_\_\_\_\_

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 3:10-21 — Samuel Learned the Voice of God

Most theologians think that Samuel was around twelve years old at this point — still in an age of innocence, but also an age when the challenges and ways of the world were becoming more obvious.

- What response did Eli counsel Samuel to give if he heard the voice again?
- Summarize the Word of the Lord that came to Samuel:
- What were the first actions that Samuel tended to in the morning after the Lord spoke to him (v.15)?

Sometimes when perplexing things come into your life,  
it's wise to just *do normal*.

- The priest, Eli, is not an easy person to characterize — he's not all good — and he's not all bad. List some adjectives you might use to describe him in **Chapters 2&3**:
- In what ways might your current study change how you would teach the lesson of the boy Samuel in a Sunday School class?



## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Hannah's prayer of praise and thanksgiving has often been compared to Mary's expression of praise when she went to visit Elizabeth. READ **Luke 1:46-55**. What commonalities do you see?
2. Hannah declared in **1 Samuel 2:2**, "*There is no rock like our God.*" Discuss what that means in general, and to you personally.
3. There is a stark contrast between the innocence of Samuel and the abuse of power of Hophni and Phineas — all in the same 'church setting'. How can this remind you not to generalize an entire group, based on the actions of some, or even one?
4. Was Eli 100% responsible for the conduct of his sons? Is a parent always 100% responsible for the conduct of their children?
5. How would you approach a mother, who was obviously letting her children get away with sinful behavior (like Eli)?
6. To young Samuel, serving God meant serving Eli in the temple. But God had brought a word of judgement upon Eli. How do you think it was possible for Samuel to grow and flourish in such a corrupt atmosphere?





## Week Three — 1 Samuel Chapters 4-5-6-7

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Our approach to difficulties can reveal quite a bit about how genuine our faith is, or isn't. Israel's approach to its enemies was equally revealing. In these four chapters, Israel twice encountered a difficult time with its enemy, the Philistines. In each instance, their approach was different and the outcome of the battle reflected that.

The Philistines were an ancient problem for Israel from as far back as Abraham's day; but, most recently, during the time of the two judges: Shamgar (**Judges 3**) and Samson (**Judges 13-16**). Here, they surface again without much introduction or explanation.

### *Day 1:*

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#### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 4:1-11 — The Ark was Captured

- What was the outcome of the initial battle with the Philistines, as described in v.1-2?
  
- In v.3, the elders asked what seemed to be a sincere question of the Lord, but neglected to wait for His answer. What did they decide was the best course of action?
  
- Who seemed to have possession (or access to) the Ark of the Covenant of God (v.4)?

The Philistines, who appear in both Judges and Samuel, were of the *Sea Peoples* who migrated from across the Aegean and settled on the coastal plain of Palestine around 1200 B.C. establishing a league of city-states. —ESV Study Bible<sup>1</sup>

So the Ark was transferred to the battlefield. Even though both Moses and Joshua had placed the Ark in front of an advancing Israelite nation in the past, there was no precedent in God's Law (or His plan) for the Ark to be a mascot for war. This was an idea of their own making — not an instruction from the Lord. They hadn't taken time to wait to hear from God.

- Describe the energy and excitement from the Israelite camp:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Describe the angst and alarm from the Philistine camp:

If two professional sports teams faced off with these emotions, you might expect one team to suffer from overconfidence, while the other team might try to muster all the determination it could find. It's easy, from this narrative, to tell which was which. And the outcome of the battle went just the way you might suspect. From **v.10...**

**"So the Philistines \_\_\_\_\_ and Israel was \_\_\_\_\_."**

- List the casualties of battle from **v.10-11:**

The Philistines thought they were capturing Israel's god;  
but God was really capturing the attention of His people!

## Day 2:

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### 📖 READ 1 Samuel 4:12-22 — The Death of Eli

I'm sure you've experienced a presidential election that didn't go the way you had hoped. You probably woke up the day after, with that sinking feeling of dread. You thought, "*Now what will become of our nation, our economy, our way of life?*"

If you've ever had a feeling like that, you can empathize a bit with how Israel may have felt as the news of the battle reached them. All of its hopes for stability, safety, and security had evaporated in one day! Its military was demolished, morale was destroyed and spiritual mooring was lost to the Philistines.

- Where had Eli stayed during this battle (v.12)?
- What did the author point out as Eli's main concern (v.13)?
- What was Eli's age and condition (v.15)?
- What was the one piece of news that *tipped Eli over the edge*, so to speak (v.18)?
- What effect did the news have on Phinehas's wife (v.19)?

It's interesting that the author chose to recount this tragic, premature birth of Phinehas's wife. We hadn't heard about her before, and she didn't seem to have a significant part in this narrative. But one statement she made demanded her inclusion in this epic. During the course of expressing their own personal pain and perplexity, she was describing the pain and perplexity facing an entire nation.

- Write the meaning of the child's name, which was stated at the close of **Chapter 4**:

Everything in Israel was about to change. Change isn't always bad, sometimes it's painful, sometimes it becomes a motivator. Through all of this pain, both Israel *and* the Philistines would know that God was truly in charge of the affairs of men!

“The glory of God had indeed departed, but not because the ark of God had been captured; the ark had been captured because the glory had already departed.” —H. L. Ellison <sup>2</sup>

### *Day 3:*

#### **READ 1 Samuel 5:1-12 — The Philistines and the Ark**

The Philistines must have felt quite proud of their double-hitter. Not only did they defeat the army of Israel, they captured the God of Israel — or so they thought.

- Where did the Philistines put the newly acquired Ark (**v.2**)?
- READ **Judges 16:23-30**. Explain why this whole situation must have been especially satisfying for the Philistines:

- In **v.3**, their smug satisfaction came to an abrupt halt. What did they discover when they woke up in the morning?

Waking to find your god *bowed-down* with broken hands and head is bad enough, but then, when the affliction becomes personal, it's time to do something. In the King James version, **v.6** says they were, "*smote with emerods,*" which are hemorrhoidal tumors or dysentery.

- In **v.8-10**, their first idea was to send the Ark to \_\_\_\_\_ — same result! So they sent the Ark on to \_\_\_\_\_, once again — same result. (Side note — you can always detect a lack of critical thinking when people repeat the same course of action, hoping for different results.)

God would not be mocked. Israel had treated the Ark superstitiously and the Philistines had treated it disrespectfully, and God was not going to tolerate either approach.

- Is there some area of your life where you have begun to lean toward *superstition*, regarding the things of the Lord?
- Is there some area of your life where you have taken on an attitude of *disrespect* toward the instructions or the ways of the Lord?

Note what the Holy Spirit is showing you and what changes you need to make:



## Day 4:

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### READ 1 Samuel 6:1-21 — The Ark Sent Home

I wonder if the Philistines felt that the Ark had lived among them about seven months too long! The process of sending it back to Israel must have seemed like an admission of defeat and been very humbling. But it was their only choice, and actually it was a good choice.

- The lords of the Philistines seemed to know something of Israel's history. What did they liken their current troubles to, and what historical mistake did they not want to repeat (v.6)?

In some ways, it was quite brilliant to put the Ark on a new cart and attach it to momma cows, who would have to tow against their natural instincts toward their young. No one was sure what would happen, but they seemed to be prepared to give God credit if the Ark miraculously worked its way back into Israelite territory.

- In what two ways did the men of Beth-shemesh initially honor the presence of the Ark (v.14-15)?

Read these passages and note God's instructions, intending to help them understand the holiness of God connected to the Ark of the Covenant:

- Exodus 40:1-15
- Leviticus 16:2
- Numbers 4:5
- Deuteronomy 10:8

Now that you've been reminded about God's instructions...

- How did some of the men of Beth-shemesh eventually dishonor the Ark (v.19)?
  
- What was the result (v.19)?

The response at Beth-shemesh is actually a common response today. A person violates God's instructions, which brings discipline into their life, but rather than repenting and doing what's right, they merely put God out of their life — out of sight — out of mind.

Has this ever happened in your life? I actually see it often. People want to do something that clearly goes against God's instructions — let's say physical relations outside of marriage — living together. Things go okay for a season, but then spiral into problems. Some of the problems may even be the discipline of the Lord. But rather than admit their wrong and humbly ask God's forgiveness, they choose to put God out of their life — out of sight — out of mind.

Now is a good time for each of us to ponder whether we've acted similarly to the men of Beth-shemesh, who didn't care to follow God's instructions for holy living. God actually *wants* to bless us, and if He brings discipline, it is for our benefit — to make us whole.

“My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”  
Hebrews 12:6

### READ 1 Samuel 7:1-2 — A Proper Lodging for the Ark

- In what two ways did the men of Kiriath-jerim honor the presence of the Ark in their territory?

## Day 5:

### 📖 READ 1 Samuel 7:3-17 — Samuel Judged Israel

As chapter seven begins, Israel had still been struggling with double-mindedness related to their foreign gods; the Philistines were still a nuisance; and we catch up with Samuel — now at least twenty years older. He had matured into a well-respected judge, regularly making his way around the towns of Israel.

The last thing we read about Samuel was in **3:20**, “**And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.**” Now, the next thing we read is that Samuel was speaking to all Israel again.

- Summarize his message to Israel in **v.3**:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Do you think it was bold of Samuel to promise that God would deliver them from the Philistines? How could he be sure?

Israel’s actions might accurately be described as:

*Repentance* → *Confession* → *Petition*

Explain what these actions looked like, from the following verses:

- Repentance **v.4**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Confession **v.6**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Petition **v.8-9**

The Philistines must have gotten really nervous when they saw Israel gather at Mizpah. They probably thought there was little reason for people to gather, except to prepare for war, so perhaps they should make the first strike.

- What *was* Israel doing at Mizpah?

This second time that Israel faced a battle with the Philistines, rather than taking the Ark as a war mascot, they had a completely different approach.

- What did they put their faith in for victory (**v.8-9**)?
  
- What was the outcome?

They must have been overjoyed! When we become overjoyed at God's gracious intervention in our lives — it's good to make a big deal about it. Samuel made a big deal of it, by taking a stone (which I'm sure was sizeable) and using it to create a monument.

- Write the seven words from **v.12** that define ***Ebenezer***:

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I've often said that we should turn significant moments of our lives into opportunities to raise an **Ebenezer**. What has God done for you recently that needs to be documented and shared?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Israel viewed the Ark of God as a sort of good luck charm. Can you think of an example of people today making something that should remind them of the Lord into a good luck charm?
2. What was God communicating by what He did to Dagon?
3. Samuel's message to Israel, in **Chapter 7**, was a plea for them to *repent*. What does it mean to *repent*? What did repentance look like for them?
4. If someone asked you to pray for God to rescue them in some specific way, and you knew they were entangled in sinful activity, how would you respond to them? Would you go ahead and pray?
5. What is the difference between *reverence* and *superstition*?
6. In **Chapter 7**, Samuel carried on with the sacrifice in the face of enemy attack. How does that inspire you in your life?
7. Can you share with your group a significant *Ebenezer* from your life?





## Week Four — 1 Samuel Chapters 8-9-10

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Fear and anxiety about the future is a recipe for instability in anyone's life. But when a whole community, or a whole nation, worries in unison, they tend to act rashly — even irrationally! This seems to have been the situation that came over Israel.

As chapter eight begins, many years have gone by and Samuel is now old. Even though Samuel had been well-respected, we all know how public opinion and public confidence can begin to change.

Let's see what we can learn about Israel's history and observe about our own temptations, given similar circumstances.

### *Day 1:*

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#### READ 1 Samuel 8:1-9 — Israel Demanded a King

- Who made Joel and Abijah judges over Israel (v.1)?
- Do you recall a precedent for that in the history of Israel?
- Who usually made men judges in Israel?
- What similarities do you think the author wanted us to see between Joel and Abijah, and Hophni and Phinehas?



- What two problems/concerns did the elders of Israel present to Samuel about their nation's future (v.5)?
- What solution did the elders offer to solve the problem (v.5)?
- What was Samuel's reaction to their demand (v.6)?
- What was the Lord's response to their demand (v.7-9)?

**Q — Who were these elders?**

Unlike the *Levities*, we don't have a firm definition of who was to be an *elder* at this point in Israel's history. They were likely a group of men from various cities or regions that were *older*, respected, and had the time to gather occasionally for community business. (Remember the *elders of the city* that Boaz talked with in **Ruth 4.**)

**Q — Did the elders have a good decision-making track record?**

Well, so far in **1 Samuel**, their decisions haven't been stellar.

- Go back to **4:3** and note the last, fairly terrible idea they had:



## Day 2:

### 🌀 READ 1 Samuel 8:10-22 — Samuel Warned Israel about a King

- List some things that Samuel warned about life under a king that they might not have thought of:

Once people repeat the same idea, concept or plan over and over (i.e., *we need a king to rule over us*); it's usually true that no amount of information, instruction or warning is likely to change their minds. This was true in **Chapter 8**, and it's still true in our culture today.

### 🌀 READ 1 Samuel 9:1-14 — Saul Chosen to be King

We're reminded in this chapter that God is often working behind the scenes. *We* rarely think that God may be at work in that unbearably long DMV line; or that snarled freeway that makes us late; or the unexpected visit from our neighbor. But we should remember, God is working in the ordinary things of life...like a search for lost donkeys!

It's significant to note that Saul was from a wealthy family from the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_.

- List all of the positive traits of Saul you find in today's reading:

- Did you find any negative traits?

### *Day 3:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### READ 1 Samuel 9:15-27 — Saul Proclaimed King

We find that Saul didn't know who Samuel was — but Samuel recognized Saul. Now that's fascinating — Saul's home was in Gibeah, Samuel's home was very close by, in Ramah. This seems to indicate that Saul probably didn't participate in the spiritual life of Israel that was led by Samuel.

- According to **v.16**, how did God intend to benefit Israel through Saul's leadership?

When Samuel told Saul he would have a special role to play in Israel, Saul answered (v.21), "*Am I not a \_\_\_\_\_, from the least of the tribes of Israel?*"

He wasn't exaggerating or being modest, Benjamin *was* the smallest tribe by number at this point — and that happened because of a civil war, not all that long before this time.



- What would be the third sign near Gibeah?

These prophets were not likely '*after the pattern of Samuel*', but rather a group of musician/worshipers, who had dedicated their lives to serving God — maybe what we would think of, today, as monks.

- What type of interesting transformation came over Saul, as mentioned in **v.6 & 9**?
  
- What might we call a New Testament counterpart of this type of change in someone's life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why do you think Saul only told his uncle about the matter of the donkeys and nothing else? What does this hint about his inner thoughts and feelings on this matter?

## Day 5:

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 10:17-27 — Saul Proclaimed King

Israel had frequently gathered at Mizpah for important business over the years. This was the place that was chosen to make Saul's appointment public.

- Samuel already knew God's choice for their king — he could have announced the winner and invited Saul up to the podium. Instead, he drew lots in the presence of the people. Why do you think this may have been an important strategy?

- Where was Saul found hiding?

Once they brought Saul forward, no one could miss him because of his height. Samuel named *him* as the one the Lord chose.

- What was the people's response in **v.24**?
- Apparently, not *everyone* joined in the well-wishes. List the two categories of people mentioned in **v.26-27**, and their attitudes toward their new king.

## Lessons on Leading

The book of 1 Samuel contains an abundance of lessons about leadership. You may be a mother — leading your little tribe; or a teacher — leading your classroom; maybe you lead a ministry or support a leader in ministry, or perhaps you lead employees. If any of these situations apply to you, you'll find useful spiritual lessons in this book.

So, from this point forward, we're going to add this page, "**Lessons on Leading**", in addition to our regular "**Thought & Discussion**" page.

I hope it will be a great benefit to you!

1. These chapters remind us that not everyone who is called to lead, feels completely equipped or ready to do so (Saul was hiding with the suitcases). What can you do to overcome your insecurities in areas where God has called you to lead?
2. What can you do to strengthen someone whom God has chosen to lead you? They may feel ill-equipped for the task!
3. Some men pushed back at Saul's leadership, before he even did a thing (**10:27**). Wisdom would dictate that, once God has made an appointment, it would be wise to support rather than subvert. Does this concept have an application to your life?
4. Saul *held his peace* (**10:27**) from confronting those who opposed him. How can this concept work to your advantage in your life?



## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. By asking for a king, Israel was telling God exactly *how* to help them in their future. Have you been guilty of telling God exactly *how* to help you in your situation, rather than letting Him choose?
2. Samuel was personally offended at the elder's demand (8:6), "**Give us a king to judge us.**" A change in a ministry doesn't necessarily mean that everything and everyone who already ministered was bad or ineffective — but it can feel that way. Have you ever been *replaced* in ministry and initially felt like Samuel?
3. How does one overcome emotions that may arise from a change or replacement? How does one prepare for that inevitable situation?
4. It couldn't have been easy for Saul to be a regular farmer one day, and the King of Israel the next. It's also not easy for us to live transformed lives around those who knew us before. What advice would you give someone on this matter?
5. We read of Saul (10:9): "**God gave him another heart.**" We would tend to expect perfection then, right? In our lives, even though God does change our hearts when we are saved — how does our personal responsibility play into the equation? Should we expect perfection?





## Week Five — 1 Samuel Chapters 11-12-13

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Do you remember when we speculated that Israel's desire for a king may have been rooted in their appetite to be politically comparable to the nations around them? During the time of the Judges, while all the other nations had a dynasty of leaders, Israel would simply cry out to God when they were in trouble, and God would raise up a judge (a man or woman to fight on their behalf). The judge operated through the **power of God**, but only served on an *as-needed* basis.

Now they had a king. Their king was still farming though, because there wasn't really any infrastructure for *where* a king was to spend his time, *what* he was to do, nor *how* he was to do it. But they had a king. Let's see if this king would operate in the **power of God**.

### *Day 1:*

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#### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 11:1-11 — Saul Called Israel to Arms

If two warring nations agreed to a treaty, it saved a lot of lives, trouble, destruction and time.

- What was the one condition that Nahash would accept in order to make a treaty between their people(v.2)?
  
- Once the word of this ultimatum reached Gibeah, what was the reaction of the village in general (v.5)?
  
- What was Saul's reaction — emotionally and physically (v.6)?

The Ammonites were relatives of Israel, descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot (**Genesis 19:30-38**). God had forbidden Israel to take any of their territory in the Promised Land since He had given it to Lot as an inheritance (**Deuteronomy 2:19**). Thus, Israel and Ammon were to live as neighbors.

Isn't it interesting that Saul's dramatic response and call to arms seemed to parallel that dreadful story from **Judges 19** that we mentioned last week? Certainly, all of Israel would have had a strong reaction. It was effective — the nation responded in unison under the leadership of Saul.

- Saul linked himself with Samuel in his *call to arms* message. Why do you think that was a wise move?
- How many men showed up at Bezek, ready for battle (**v.8**)?
- When Jabesh learned that help was on the way, they still told Nahash that they would surrender the next day. What was their strategy in that?
- How do you think Saul was able to transform himself from a farmer one day, to a military giant and king the next? Are there any clues in today's passage regarding this transformation?

## Day 2:

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### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 11:12-15 — The Kingdom is Renewed

What an amazing victory achieved under Saul's leadership! Israel *had* to have been quite satisfied with their new king. Their hopes and dreams for safety and stability were seeming to come true.

As we've pointed out, public opinion swings pretty quickly. Now, after this successful battle, there was a call to hunt down anyone who had previously questioned Saul's appointment back at Mizpah, and *put them to death*. We roll our eyes at the *over-reaction*, but note Saul's response! He could have said, '*Yeah, all of you who didn't believe in me, step forward right now!*' But...

- What was Saul's response (v.13)?
- To whom did he give credit?
- What words would you use to describe Saul at this point?

Samuel called the people to assemble at \_\_\_\_\_ (v.14).

- For what purpose?

Saul was *becoming* the King of Israel in multiple stages at multiple locations. Let's review them:

- Ramah** (private) for Saul to understand God's choice.
- Mizpah** (public) for Israel to understand God's choice.
- Gilgal** (public) for Israel to embrace God's choice.

Each stage had a unique purpose, but maybe this “*renewal of the kingdom*” at Gilgal was the most symbolic.

- READ **Joshua 4:19-24** and explain why gathering at Gilgal, right at this moment, could be described as a *renewal of the kingdom*:

### READ 1 Samuel 12:1-13 — Samuel Bids Farewell

In what seemed like a *swan song*, Samuel addressed the people in a way that felt as though it might have been his final act of leadership. (It was not his final act, by the way.) There are three distinct parts to his speech. We’ll study the first two today, and the third tomorrow.

**Part One: v.1-5—In Defense of Samuel’s Leadership** — Since Samuel was an old man, most people had lived exclusively under his leadership for their entire lifetime — no other prophet or judge.

- Summarize Samuel’s review of his years as a judge of Israel:

**Part Two: v.6-15— In Defense of God’s Past Attention** — Samuel wanted to leave no doubt that it was God who personally raised up leaders, when the nation cried out to Him in their need.

- For the trials in Egypt, whom did God appoint (**v.8**)?
- Then, when troubled by the Canaanites, the Philistines and the Moabites, whom did God raised up(**v.11**)?
- Now that the Ammonites troubled them, what did they ask for?

## Day 3:

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### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 12:14-25 — Samuel Warned Israel to Fear God

Remember, Samuel's speech seemed to have taken place at Gilgal, while Israel was on a *high* from their victory over the Ammonites and while, at the moment, Saul could do no wrong.

Some leaders have a certain charisma that draws out people's trust. These types of leaders can actually get away with quite a bit for some reason. Perhaps Samuel was pretty good at *reading the crowd* and he knew that there was a *Saul-euphoria* in the air. Maybe he felt this was the right time to issue, not only a stern warning — but one with a demonstration of God's power.

- In **v.14**, what did Samuel say would be required for the people and the king to live in safety and security?
  
- And in **v.15**, if they did not obey, what would happen to both the people and the king?

Now, we come to the third phase of Samuel's speech:

### **Part Three: v.16-25 — In Defense of Trusting in God Alone —**

- What did Samuel ask of the Lord, as a demonstration of His displeasure over Israel asking for a king (**v.18**)?
  
- How did the people respond to this calamity (**v.18-19**)?



Good leaders know just when to bring reassurance. In the same way a good parent may warn or scold a child for foolish behavior — that parent can detect true remorse, and knows when *enough is enough*. A point comes when the child needs reassurance of the parent's love and ongoing attention.

Samuel gave this reassurance in **v.20-25** of his speech.

- What aspects of God's character did he remind them of?

- How did he promise to continue with his own leadership?

*Behold,  
the Lord  
has set a  
king over  
you!* 12:13

- Summarize the most important aspect of *their part* of walking with God:

*It is the Lord who goes before you.  
He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you  
Deuteronomy 31:8*

## Day 4:

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 13:1-7 — Saul's High Point as King

The dating at the beginning of this chapter isn't as clear as we might like. It probably means there was one year between Saul being proclaimed King at Mizpah, and the incident with Nahash and the men of Jabesh. Then, two more years passed until the current moment. It doesn't appear that Saul went back to the field after that incredible victory for Jabesh, but rather started building a national military and acted more like a king than a judge.

Having a military at the ready wasn't necessarily wrong or sinful, but it did require a continuous focus — and having to focus on army life, even during peacetime — may have led to political missteps. For example, everything in these verses seems to indicate that Jonathan initiated a surprise attack on the garrison of Philistines at Geba — because that's what fighting men do — they attack! (Our hint is in **v.3**, "*the Philistines heard of it.*" If they had struck first, they would have known ahead of time.)

That move, on Jonathan's part, was the equivalent of starting a war. Once a war begins, it's important that everyone is notified.

- How did Saul alert the people that their nation was now at war with the Philistines (**v.3**)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Who was credited with defeating the garrison of Philistines (**v.4**)?

It's possible that Saul took improper credit for his son's work, but more likely, he was protecting Jonathan from the inevitable criticism of having *poked-the-bear*, so to speak.

- What was the approximate ratio of Philistine warriors to those in the Israelite army (v.2 & 5)?
- How did the men of Israel respond when they saw the Philistine army amassing (v.6-7)?
- Where were the people called up to join Saul (v.7)?

Go back and read **1 Samuel 10:7-8**. When we read those verses the first time, in the context of the chapter, it seemed like something Saul was instructed to do right in the moment. But taking into account the current storyline, it appears that instruction was more of an open invitation for Saul to send for the Prophet Samuel, when a situation came up that warranted a prophet's presence.

It's likely that the phrase, *'Do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you,'* spoke to Saul's ongoing new role in leading the kingdom. We might have worded it, *'You're in charge now—take each day as it comes—do what you think needs to be done'.*

And the instruction about Saul going to Gilgal and waiting on Samuel for seven days to offer burnt offerings probably meant something like, *'When you need special insights from the Lord, Gilgal will be our rendezvous site. Wait for me there for seven days, I'll provide the sacrifice and give you the Lord's instruction.'*

*If you will fear the Lord and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well. 12:14*

## Day 5:

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Today's reading is pretty hard to take because it signals the beginning of the end for Saul. Up to this point, everything we've read about Saul has been fairly positive — we're actually somewhat proud of our young farmer, who was plucked out of the field and crowned King over Israel. I mean, he didn't apply for the job, it was thrust upon him and he's done pretty well so far.

But military success (or any success) isn't the measure of our lives before God — faith and obedience are! Samuel knew this! Samuel warned both Saul (and Israel) about this! It's not easy to warn someone about the dangers of turning away, and then be forced to watch them make the very mistakes you warned them about.

### READ 1 Samuel 13:8-15 — Saul had a Waiting Problem

Saul was a king — not a priest. Kings do king things and priests do priest things. Yet, Saul was an ambitious soul, and he got busy and did the priest things that he thought needed to be done — he offered the burnt offering and the peace offering, and blessed himself.

- What excuse did Saul offer to Samuel for doing this (v.11)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Did Samuel actually arrive late at Gilgal? Do you think he got there within the seven-day period (v.10)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What was Samuel's initial reaction to what Saul had done (v.13)?

- What did Samuel declare would be the long-term consequences of Saul's disobedience (v.13-14)?
  
- Does this seem excessive to you?

We have now experienced a trio of family legacies dismantled. First, Eli was told that his sons would not inherit the priesthood; second, Samuel's sons (whom he had made judges) were also set aside as unfit for God's service; and now, we find that Saul has received the same sentence — his kingdom (family line) will not continue to reign.

We wonder, at this point, if only Saul and Samuel knew this. We wonder if Saul thought he could circumvent God's decree. We wonder if Samuel was sorry that he had anointed Saul. We wonder if God would continue to bless Israel under Saul's rule.

### **🌀 READ 1 Samuel 13:16-23 — Threat of War Amounts to Nothing**

Saul had an army of 600 remaining. However, the Philistines didn't seem interested in a major attack anyway. Rather than war, they merely annoyed Israel with their raids and their monopoly on sharpening weapons.

What lessons about learning to wait on God's timing can you lift out of these chapters, and apply to your current circumstances?

## Lessons on Leading

1. Messengers from Jabesh Gilead didn't come directly to Samuel or Saul, who were both leaders. They "**reported the matter in the ears of the people.**" As a leader, it can be frustrating when people don't come directly to you! How can you move forward and lead, even when people tend to overlook your leadership?
2. Saul boldly linked himself with Samuel, as he called up an army to fight Nahash. What is the benefit of linking arms with either previous leaders or other strong leaders, rather than going solo?
3. READ **Psalm 77:11-12**. Everyone should find occasions to recount God's faithfulness; this is especially true of leaders (like Samuel and like you). How can *you* do this?
4. Saul may have taken credit for Jonathan's imprudent strike in order to deflect criticism away from his young son. Leaders *should* protect the youngers. In what ways can you do this?
5. As a leader, Samuel had to deliver a difficult and frank message to Saul at Gilgal. Do you think someone can be an effective leader if they buckle when it's time to speak the hard truth?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. When Saul heard of the plight of Jabesh, the text says, *the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul* and it also says, *his anger was kindled*. We don't tend to think those two things should go together. Do you think the *Spirit of God* and *anger* can ever coexist? Can you think of another example in Scripture of *righteous anger*?
2. In what specific ways does Samuel's account of his personal integrity as a leader (ch. 12) inspire you?
3. By offering the sacrifice himself at Gilgal, Saul demonstrated self-sufficiency — a neglect to wait for guidance from the Lord. In what areas have you stopped waiting for (or asking for) God's guidance and just moved forward on your own?
4. Does inherited leadership always lead to an abuse of power (as we saw with both Eli and Samuel's sons)?
5. When someone in a position of power does something wrong or bad, we often jump to the conclusion that they were never called or gifted in the first place. How does today's lesson shape your opinion about that?

## Notes from Teaching on Week 5 —

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## Week Six — 1 Samuel Chapters 14-15

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Remember, this narrative is meant to be *heard* like a story. That's why we have some really colorful, lengthy accounts with seemingly insignificant details — it makes a *great* story! But even these trivial particulars give us further insight to understand God's ways.

### Day 1:

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#### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 14:1-5 — The Players and Their Positions

- With the **Chapter 13** episode of Jonathan and the Philistines in mind, why do you think Jonathan didn't tell his father that he and his armor-bearer were about to do a repeat?
  
- Name the man in **v.3** (and his lineage) that the writer wanted to point out to us.

In Chapter two, God told Eli his descendants would be cut off from the priesthood; and yet, it hasn't happened yet. Here was Eli's grandson, still functioning as a priest for Saul. We wonder if Ahijah's presence comforted Saul, as he may have considered that perhaps his own kingdom may prevail longer than expected.

#### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 14:6-15 — The Faith of Jonathan

There is nothing to dislike about Jonathan's faith in God's ability to show His strength through His people. There was never a question as to whether or not they would fight the Philistines — it was just a matter of *where* — down below, or up on the top of the hill!

*Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.* 14:6

- Describe the events that happened after Jonathan had killed the first twenty men (**v.15**).

### ☞ READ 1 Samuel 14:16-23 — Victory After the Sneak Attack

The Philistines were on the run. One would think Saul would have quickly led the charge against Israel's enemies. Instead, he wanted to find out who initiated this sneak attack without his permission — who was missing? This was the first of many signs that Saul was becoming a control freak.

- In **v.18**, what item did Saul ask Ahijah to bring him (presumably to take into battle)?
- Explain why that was a bad idea (a review of **Chapter 4** might be useful).

### *Day 2:* \_\_\_\_\_

The day of battle was difficult, but Saul made it far more difficult than it needed to be. Perhaps Saul's feelings of insecurity were mounting. Maybe he felt he was losing control. Maybe he yearned for that inner assurance (albeit a superstitious assurance) that would follow a spiritual sign — something like taking the Ark into battle — but there was no time to retrieve it.

What was the next best thing? Maybe something that didn't need to be requisitioned — fasting was spiritual — what a great idea! He would have the ENTIRE army fast while they fought!

**🌀 READ 1 Samuel 14:24-35 — Fasting, Fighting and Fatigue**

Probably the only thing worse than fasting while you're fighting, is fasting and fighting in a forest of sweets!

- Why *hadn't* the soldiers eaten any of the honey (v.26)?
- Why *had* Jonathan eaten the honey (v.27)?
- Can you think of a foolish oath from the book of Judges that this situation reminds you of?

Have you ever come home so hungry that you didn't have energy for meal prep — instead you just started eating Oreos? That's kind of what was going on with the men of Israel. They were famished and faint, and once they finally got their hands on the spoils, they began to just kill and eat.

- What Law of God did they disregard by their actions (v.32-33)? (you can also check **Deuteronomy 12:23**)
- How could that have been avoided?
- What was Saul's solution to the people's sin?

### READ 1 Samuel 14:36-52 — Knowing When Enough is Enough

Saul's army had made their point with the Philistines. They already regained much territory, and gathered a great deal of spoils. It was time to go home. But Saul had other ideas. He wanted to keep plundering the Philistines through the night.

- What did his army say about this nighttime war(v.36)?
  
- What did the priest suggest (v.36)?

When they asked for God's counsel, God was silent. Saul assumed it was because someone in his army was insubordinate — they must be *under a curse* for violating Saul's edict. Saul concluded that God would not speak until the guilty party was revealed.

- Who was ultimately drawn by lot (v.42)?

Jonathan didn't actually disobey the order by eating honey because he didn't even know about his father's order — he wasn't the insubordinate one. Now, in a fascinating twist of irony, the entire army became insubordinate by refusing Saul's order that *Jonathan should die!*

The end of this chapter describes Saul's achievements as a protector of Israel. It's true — he was very attentive to the neighboring threats, and proved to be a capable commander and king.

But one thing we have learned is that he was also very impatient when it came to waiting on God. Don't you find the same is true for you? In those areas where you are fairly capable, it's quite easy to just move forward with your own plan, in your own strength. We need to remember that God strengthens those who wait on HIM!

## Day 3:

**Chapter 15** begins the long, slow, curtain closure on Saul's reign. He was actually given an opportunity for obedience in this chapter — but he blew it. In God's economy, this is the end. In day-to-day life in Israel however, Saul would still be in charge for a number of years.

### ✞ READ 1 Samuel 15:1-9 — Israel Instructed to Bring Judgment

- Samuel announced God's mission to Saul — he was to bring judgment on a people group named after whom (v.2)?

To understand this mission more fully, read **Exodus 17:8-16**.

- What was the offence against Israel all those years ago?
- What judgment did God pronounce back then?
- Had that judgment come to pass yet?

(Interestingly, in **Numbers 24:20**, Balaam also prophesied about their destruction.)

**Q. Isn't this a little cruel on God's part — to call for the utter destruction of an entire people group?**

A modern reader cringes at this instruction, but only because we rarely consider God using His people as an arm of His own judgment. The Amalekites were wicked back in Moses' day, and God had actually given them centuries (between then and now) to repent.

The phrase, ***devoted to destruction***, should remind you of other situations and other missions in Israel's history, where God gave this same mission — like Sihon, Og, Jericho, Ai.

God instructed them to ***devote to destruction*** because He did not want His people to collect anything into their midst, which may have led to temptation or disease from the ungodly society.

- How did Saul deal compassionately with the Kenites and why?

Read **Joshua 1:16** for more information.

Saul defeated the Amalekites and ***devoted to destruction*** all of the people...except...

- Who did Saul spare alive (**v.9**)?
- Why do you think he may have done this?
- What other resources did Saul keep (**v.9**)?

One thing that Paul and I learned early in our parenting adventure is that *partial obedience is disobedience!* This partial disobedience on Saul's part will cost more than he's ever going to admit!

### *Day 4:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### READ 1 Samuel 15:10-21 — Saul is Rejected

One thing we should note from God's reaction is that He's always watching and always aware. We can't hide, we can't play games, we can't blame others, we can't justify!

Saul's failure to fully obey God is his first layer of deterioration; but his pleasure with his accomplishments was the icing on the cake.


- Describe Saul's actions near Carmel (**v.12**) — What did this reveal about him?

As Samuel and Saul met, Saul's greeting held no sense of misbehavior, and quite a bit of happy satisfaction. God had prepared Samuel, and he had spent the night grieving what was to come — but he was a true leader, and he knew that God would give him strength for the inevitable confrontation.

- Explain how Saul was blame-shifting in **v.15 & 21**.
  
- Explain how Saul rewrote God's command with his own view of benefits from **v.15 & 21**.

The lesson here for us is that choosing our *own version* of God's will is NOT what He desires for us! If we get into the habit of filtering God's wishes and God's ways to accommodate our own desires, we too may miss out on a tremendous legacy that God has planned for us.

### *Day 5:*

 **READ 1 Samuel 15:22-35 — Obedience is Greater than Sacrifice**

Try to memorize **verse 22** — It's a universal truth. It's what God wants from His people. **Verse 23**, on the other hand, seems to call out some of the personal character traps that became hardened in Saul's heart.

- What is **rebellion** (define)?
  
- How did **rebellion** play out in Saul's life?



- Define *presumption* (*stubbornness, arrogance* in other translations).
- How did *arrogance* play out in Saul's life?
- Because Saul had let those sins take root in his heart, what did he now have to forfeit (v.23)?

Double-minded people tend to tell you what they think you want to hear — that's why their story changes sometimes. Saul did this with Samuel. Fill in the words from these verses that show Saul's duplicity:

V.20 "I have \_\_\_\_\_ *the voice of the Lord.*"

V.24 "I have \_\_\_\_\_, I have \_\_\_\_\_ *the commandments of the Lord.*"

Actually, one thing remained that mattered to Saul and that one thing was crystal clear to him, with no double-mindedness:

V.30 "Yet \_\_\_\_\_ *me now before the* \_\_\_\_\_ *of my* \_\_\_\_\_."

And with that, Samuel and Saul parted ways. When Samuel turned away, Saul lost a Godly partner. He had already lost the dynasty, lost his throne, lost his reputation and in Part Two of this Bible Study, he will lose his mind, and eventually lose his life. It's a sad ending to the legacy of Israel's first king.

But, take heart — good things are coming in Part Two of **1 Samuel** because now we can once again anticipate *A Coming King*.

## Lessons on Leading

1. A good leader should appreciate hard work and initiative among those they lead; but Saul had an unhealthy need to control everyone around him. What would be positive examples of a good leader related to this concept?
2. A good spiritual leader tries to create an environment that promotes obedience. How did Saul's edict about fasting do the exact opposite? How can you create an environment that helps those *in your world* to obey?
3. What is the fallout when a leader is more concerned with looking good in front of others than following God's instructions?
4. Saul's foolish rule about fasting actually contributed to the people's sin against God once they got their hands on the animals of spoil. As a leader, if you make a foolish rule, how should you rectify it once you realize your error?
5. Leadership isn't for the faint of heart. We saw Samuel spend an entire night grieving Saul's failure. A leader doesn't have the luxury of curling up and hibernating. How can you trust God to help you do what needs to be done, even through seasons of disappointment, discouragement, or grief?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. What does the phrase, *“To obey is better than sacrifice”*, mean in your life? How can you be tempted to sacrifice something to the Lord, rather than simply obey what He’s asked of you?
2. Why is it important to teach your children complete obedience rather than accept only partial obedience?
3. List Scriptures on obedience that provide building blocks to teach complete obedience to the Lord.
4. If you have a child (or a student) who always insists everything in his life is somebody else’s fault — how can you guide them away from constant blame-shifting?
5. **2 Corinthians 7:10** (NIV) says, *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”* Discuss how that verse applies to Saul’s sense of mere regret and how it may apply to your own life.

*Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
and to listen than the fat of rams. 15:22*

## Notes from Teaching on Week 6 —

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## ❧ 1 Samuel — The Coming King ❧ Part Two

There are no better words to express the transition between Saul and David than this passage from *The Jesus Storybook Bible*,<sup>3</sup> which provides both an interlude, and a delightful introduction to Part Two of *“The Coming King”*.

God’s people had a new land. Now they wanted a king.  
“But God is your King,” Samuel told them.  
“He is the one who looks after you best.”  
“We want a real king!” they said, “One we can see!”

God knew that a king might not be kind to his people or look after them as well as He would. But God’s people didn’t care; they wanted a king and they wanted him now! So God gave them a king.

He was called Saul and he seemed like a good king — at first.  
But he became proud and stopped listening to God.  
He didn’t obey God. Or love God with his whole heart.

“Saul can’t help me with my plan,” God said.  
“I need a king who loves me and will teach my people to love me.  
I need a true king.” God had just the one in mind.  
“Go to Bethlehem,” God told Samuel.  
“You’ll find the new king there.”

Samuel’s job was to listen to God and tell people what God said.  
So Samuel went to the little town of Bethlehem.  
God told Samuel to go to Jesse’s house.  
God was going to choose one of Jesse’s sons to be the new king.

Samuel asked Jesse to bring him each son in turn.  
So Jesse brought the oldest, tallest, strongest son.  
*This must be the new king, Samuel thought. He looks like a king.*

But God didn’t choose him. “You’re thinking about what he looks like on the outside,” God told Samuel. “But I am looking at his heart, what he’s like on the inside.”

So Jesse showed Samuel his next oldest, tallest, strongest son.  
But God didn't choose him either.  
In fact, God didn't choose any of the seven sons.  
Samuel said, "Is that all?" Jesse laughed.  
"Oh, well, there's the youngest one,  
but he's just the weakling of the family."  
"Bring him," said Samuel.

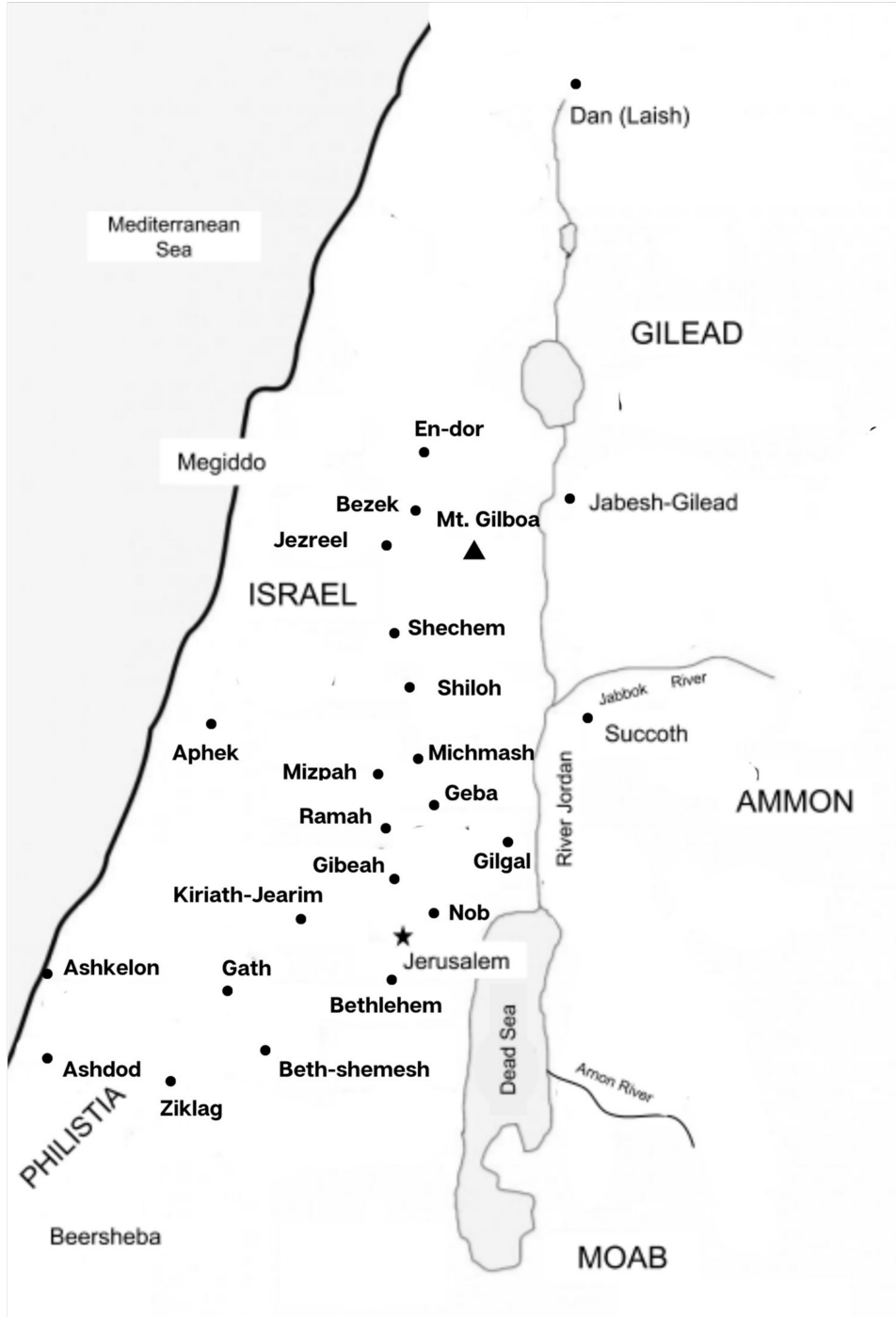
Jesse's youngest son came running up, and God spoke quietly  
to Samuel, "This is the one!" His name was David.  
"He has a heart like mine," God said.  
"It is full of love. He will help me with my Secret Rescue Plan.  
And one of his children's, children's, children will be the King.  
And that King will rule the world forever."

Samuel anointed David's head with oil —  
which was a special way to show that you are God's chosen king.  
"You will be the new king one day," Samuel told him.  
And, sure enough, when he grew up, David became king.

God chose David to be king because God was getting his people  
ready for an even greater King who was coming.  
Once again, God would say, "Go to Bethlehem.  
You'll find the new King there."  
And there, one starry night in Bethlehem, in the town of David,  
three Wise Men would find him.

*Say to the daughter of Zion,  
'Behold, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'  
Matthew 21:5*

# Map





## Week Seven — 1 Samuel Chapters 16-17

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*“A king with a heart like mine”*

— According to the children’s Bible, that’s what God was looking for.

*“The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart”*

— According to **1 Samuel 13:14**, that is what God had done.

Who had a heart like God? Who would be **The Coming King**?

For Israel, it would be **David**, from Bethlehem.

For the whole world, it would be **Jesus**, also from Bethlehem.

Two kings from the same family — both with a heart for God

— a heart to teach God’s people to love Him.

### *Day 1:*

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🔗 **READ 1 Samuel 16:1-13 — A New King is Anointed**

Somewhere along the line, Samuel probably thought he had retired from king-making. But he was wrong.

- Whose family did God send Samuel to find the next king (v.1)?
- Explain Samuel’s fears about going out in public with his horn of oil (v.2).
- Why do you think the elders were fearful when they saw Samuel approaching?

*You shall  
anoint for me  
him whom I  
declare to  
you* 16:3

Samuel considered each of Jesse's sons, as they passed before him, and each one looked the part of a king — strong, handsome, dripping with potential — but none of them were who God had in mind.

Write out what God told Samuel in **v.7b** since it is such an important concept for us to meditate on:

"For the Lord sees

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- How many of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel (**v.10**)? \_\_\_\_\_

Notice when Jesse told Samuel that David was out with the sheep, Samuel patiently said, "***We will not sit down till he comes here.***" Do you grasp the contrast here between Samuel's current willingness to wait in order to hear from God, and Saul's previous unwillingness to wait to hear from God?

- Is there something in your life that is requiring you to wait on God? How does this inspire you for such seasons of waiting?

It was worth the wait!

- How was David described in **v.12**?
- What supernatural phenomena took place that was reminiscent of Saul's anointing?

## Day 2:

### 📖 READ 1 Samuel 16:14-23 — Life with the Spirit of God

There's another fascinating contrast I'm sure the author wanted us to notice. If we delete the comment about Samuel's return to Ramah, and sew v.13 and v.14 together, look what we have:

V.13 "And the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ upon David from that day forward. V.14 Now the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ from Saul."

Saul was still the king, but he was no longer an agent of God, to represent Him before the people. From this point forward, Saul now represented his own interests and his own inner turmoil. God had chosen another. But, first, He would put that new representative through a season of testing and training.

*God's plans do not fail even when His servants may fail.*

- In those days, what was the prescription for soothing oneself from a harmful spirit (v.16)?
- List all the positive qualities of David, mentioned by Saul's servant in v.17:
  
- Describe Saul and David's initial relationship from v.21-22:



It's interesting that we're reminded of Jesse's older sons at this point in the narrative (v.12-14). We already learned their names and birth order from 16:6-9, so it seems redundant to name them again here — except that it reminds us of an important principle from the last time we met them. On that day, God had warned Samuel (v.7), “***Do not look on his appearance.***”

*Appearances* can be deceiving on both ends of the spectrum. Those first three sons of Jesse *seemed* — by all *appearances* — to be good candidates to become king. Now, those same men were standing, along with the army, before Goliath who *seemed* — by all *appearances* — to be an insurmountable foe.

We would benefit from meditating on this today. Is there something in your life that *seems* — by all *appearances* — to be an insurmountable challenge, a problem, a trial?

- What is the Goliath right now in your life?
  
- In what ways does the *appearance* of your challenge seem to be so much bigger and stronger than it actually is?
  
- In what ways does your challenge seem to be calling out to you, day after day, to wear you down?

*For the battle is the Lord's and  
he will give you into our hand.* 17:47

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## Day 4: \_\_\_\_\_

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 17:17-37 — The Army of the Living God

- How did David end up among the army (v.17-20)?
  
- How did the men of Israel react at the *appearance* of Goliath (v.24)?
  
- What three benefits, from the king, were promised to the man who killed Goliath (v.25)?

There is another phrase worthy of our time to write out by hand.

Write v.26b "For who is this \_\_\_\_\_

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Let's look careful at David's word choices in the above sentence...

- Circle David's description of Goliath (*uncircumcised Philistine*). How do you think this description differs from the perspective of the others?

- Circle David's description of his people (*armies of the living God*). How do you think this description may have differed from the way they were viewing themselves?
- Draw a box around the word **defy**. (Also note how it's a theme of this conflict from **v.10, 25, 26, 36, 45**)
  - What does it mean to **defy**?
  - Why did David find it offensive that the Philistines in general, and Goliath in particular, were *defying* God's purpose?
- King Saul was also motivated by *appearances*. What was his assessment of David's potential, based on his *appearance* (**v.33**)?
- Fighting wasn't a hard decision for David to make. What did he list as his previous successful experience in **v.34-37**?

*Let no man's  
heart fail  
because of him.  
Your servant will  
go and fight with  
this Philistine.* 17:32

## Day 5:

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These verses contain what I think may be the most recognizable Bible story of the entire Old Testament. Maybe we should pause before we read, and ask the Holy Spirit to show us something new and rich, something just for us today!

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 17:38-47 — Facing Goliath in God’s Power

- How was David accessorized for the battle by Saul (v.38-39)?
  
- The text says, David *tried in vain to go* (dressed in Saul’s armor). Why did David say he needed to cast off those things (v.39)?

Have you ever been successful while *dressed* like someone else? I don’t mean real clothes — I mean trying to *run in their lane* — trying to *be like them*? God didn’t intend for David to fight like Saul, and He doesn’t intend for *me* to do the things that He’s called *you* to do.

- In what area do you need to cast off methods meant for someone else, and face the giant with the simple resources God has personally entrusted to you?

Write v.45 “You come to me with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise;  
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.  
1 Corinthians 1:27*

- Circle the source of David's strength (*in the name of the Lord of Hosts*). How does that describe *where* his power came from?
  
- In next week's lesson, we'll see how David and Jonathan were kindred spirits. How does David's attitude in these verses remind you of Jonathan's attitude in **chapter 14**? List some phrases that characterize them both:

### READ 1 Samuel 17:48-58 — Victory in God's Power

David was the victor — Goliath fell — the Philistines fled — the Israelites pursued — and Saul wanted to know about the family of his new son-in-law.

No one but David had been willing to face a one-on-one battle with Goliath. Saul (being a head taller than the rest AND the King) should have stepped up and fought for Israel's honor. But either he had never learned to trust in God, or he had become so self-absorbed that he had forgotten all about God's power. Only David seemed to remember how to trust God.

Would David become the King of Israel who would accurately reflect God to His people? Would he be the one that would point them in the direction of trusting and honoring God? Shall we just say that he's off to a good start?

## Lessons on Leading

1. Samuel knew God called him to lead, and yet, he was fearful when God's mission sent him to anoint David. Sometimes leaders have to simply '*do it scared*'. How do you find courage to face the more fearful parts of your mission?
2. While preparing to face Goliath, David's older brother, Eliab, ridiculed him. David resisted the temptation to start up a new battle with his brother, instead he focused on the *real* enemy. What can we learn from this? What can potentially be lost, when a leader gets distracted with sideline skirmishes?
3. God gives every leader resources suited to his/her calling. David's resources in that moment were not armor and sword, but stones and sling. What are some of your resources?
4. It can be humbling to admit that someone else's mission and methods aren't a *good fit* for you — like Saul's armor wasn't a *good fit* for David. Why do women struggle with this? How can finding your *stones and slings* help you become a better leader?
5. Probably NO ONE in the whole Israelite army believed in David as he was approaching Goliath; yet he still went forward. Are you dependent on affirmation from others, or are you able to lead alone — even without approval?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Looking at outward appearances could be described as *gathering information* — not necessarily all bad. In contrast, waiting to hear from God could be described as *receiving wisdom*. Name some situations where the latter approach would be critical.
2. In light of the above, read **James 1:5** and discuss why this verse is both important and comforting.
3. People may think the moral of this chapter is, '*be strong and courageous like David.*' Actually, the lesson is, '*trust in the name of the Lord of Hosts*' as David did in **17:45**. Discuss how those are two different things.
4. What specific past experiences (like David's lion and bear) has God used to equip you for battles today?
5. It was David's regard for God's honor that motivated him to stand and fight Goliath. In what way (maybe less flamboyant, but still important) are you called to stand for God's honor today?





## Week Eight — 1 Samuel Chapters 18-19-20

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Oh, that life were as easy as slaying a giant one day and becoming king the next! But that's not how God usually raises up leaders. There is often a lonely season of testings, trials, and even suffering that God uses, in order to polish the faith and the character of those whom He chooses. Consider Abraham, Moses, and Joseph — they all had long tenures of waiting and testing.

The remainder of this Bible study might be described as *the making of a leader*. In Part One, **Samuel** was the king-maker, and now in Part Two, **difficulty** becomes the king-maker.

### Day 1:

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#### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 18:1-16 — Jealousy on the Loose

In the midst of the difficulties associated with *king-making*, God allowed David a gift of refreshment.

- What words would you use to describe David and Jonathan's relationship (v.1-4)?

David wasn't allowed to return to his quiet life of tending sheep. Now, he was either soothing the fragile nerves of a psychotic ruler, or he was battling the enemies of Israel.

- Describe David's success on the battlefield:
  
  
- Describe the women's songs about his success:

- How did David's public success change Saul's feelings toward him (v.8-9)?
- What action did Saul take when his jealousy intensified (v.11)?
- Do you think this caught David by surprise?
- Do you think Saul may have already suspected that David was his replacement?

These chapters could be used as a case study in the consequences of unchecked emotions — particularly **jealousy**. Read these passages, and note the dangers and effects of jealousy:

**Proverbs 6:34**

**Proverbs 27:4**

**Acts 7:9**

**Acts 17:5**

## Day 2:

As if deadly spears launched in the middle of a harp solo weren't bad enough, now King Saul flip-flopped on which daughter to give away, and finally asked for an extremely weird *dowry* from David!

### ✎ READ 1 Samuel 18:17-30 — Unfair Requirements

- List some aspects of Saul's relationship with his daughters that you would have wanted to correct, if you could:

- Who was Saul's oldest daughter and what did he do with her?

Today's text mentioned twice that "*Michal loved David*" (v.20, 28). This is a fascinating little detail — this is the only circumstance in all of the Old Testament where it is stated that a woman *loved* a man.

Maybe the king thought the enticement of a woman who actually *wanted* David's affections would work in his favor. Perhaps a love-struck David would be a distracted, mistake-making David.

- What was the price that Saul stated for Michal's hand in marriage (v.25)?
- What outcome had he hoped by setting that particular payment?
- Hadn't David already earned this woman by killing Goliath?



- Why do you think that something more was suddenly required of him?

David could have pitched a fit. He could have claimed unfair treatment — he could have demanded that Saul make good on his previous *Goliath promise* — he could have taken what he thought was rightly his. Instead, David put his head down, did what was asked of him, and just got the job done.

*David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.* 18:30

**Verse 28** says, *“the Lord was with David”*. Perhaps, we can apply this to our own lives by realizing that, when the Lord is with us, we don’t have to fight for equity or demand our rights. We can quietly and confidently move forward entrusting our success to the Lord.

### *Day 3:*

#### 📖 READ 1 Samuel 19:1-10 — A Second Chance for Saul

What a stark contrast this chapter portrays, even in the first verse — jealous obsession from King Saul and loyal affection from Jonathan.

- How did Jonathan attempt to reason with his father regarding David (v.4-5)?

- What effect did it have on Saul (v.6)?

David gave Saul a second chance by playing his soothing music once again in a time of need (v.9). It can sometimes be the right thing to do to give someone a *second chance*, but when that second chance brings abuse or physical harm, that should be the limit.

- What action did David take after the second *spear incident* (v.10)?

### READ 1 Samuel 19:11-24 — Michal Helped David Escape

God had given David some really loyal comrades between Jonathan and Michal. Even though he was in a tough spot, those closest to him were definitely on his side.

- List everything that Michal did for David to help him escape:

- Do Michal's actions and responses remind you of another woman from the Old Testament?

- To where did David flee (v.18)?

All the messengers sent by Saul were prevented from apprehending David — not necessarily because of his exceptional military might, but because God ordained it that way.

- How did the Lord stop each group of messengers in their tracks, and finally Saul himself?

*Many are the plans in the mind of a man,  
but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.  
Proverbs 19:21*

### *Day 4:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 20:1-23 — A Covenant with Jonathan

No one wants to put a friend in a tough spot, or in a situation where they may need to *choose sides*. I've had people say to me, 'Well, I'm not gonna pick sides here,' but honestly — sometimes you have to defend those who are afflicted or oppressed — sometimes you have to make a right judgment!

- Summarize the plan that David and Jonathan devised in order to find out who was guilty and who was innocent (v.5-12).

The new moon was the day of the new appearance of the crescent moon, marking the beginning of the month of the lunar calendar. It was one of the principal festivals (Num. 10:10, 1 Chron. 23:31). The king presided over his household's celebration of the festival. It was often impossible to predict the exact day when the new moon would become visible. The feast may have been held on the first day, or the second day (if the moon became visible then). This is why David proposed meeting on the 'third day'. — ESV Study Bible <sup>2</sup>

- Summarize the plan for Jonathan to report his findings back to David (v.18-23):

In v.14-18, we read a bittersweet plea by Jonathan, asking David to remain loyal to him once the matter of the king's jealousy and suspicion was finally uncovered. Jonathan had obviously come to the realization that David was, in fact, God's choice for Israel's King.

*May the Lord  
take vengeance  
on David's  
enemies* 20:16

In their world, when a new king ascended to power, in most nations, there was an assumption that all family members from the former dynasty would be assassinated. Can you sense the tension between petition and partnership?

*Day 5:* \_\_\_\_\_

**✞ READ 1 Samuel 20:24-42 — A Sad Farewell**

- On the second day of the feast, what reason did Jonathan give his father for David's absence (v.29)?
- Saul's reaction was immediate and against whom (v.30)?
- Name all the ways that Saul took his anger out on his son:

The final scene of this chapter is so emotional! There aren't very many passages of Scripture (besides the crucifixion) that make me reach for the Kleenex box, but this is one of them.

Don't you think they both knew that life would never be the same? Tomorrow they would wake up to a whole new world — a world without their loyal friend.

*The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.* 20:42

I thought we should end this week on the subject of friendship. In consideration of some of the things that David and Jonathan had gone through, I listed some qualities of friendships between women. Put an 'x' in front of three or four of the traits that you most need from a loyal friend:

- \_\_\_ She loves to serve the Lord as much as I do.
- \_\_\_ She encourages me to *do hard things* when necessary.
- \_\_\_ She is patient to hear my opinion on a matter.
- \_\_\_ She will let me cry when I'm hurting.
- \_\_\_ She will be happy for me when great things happen.
- \_\_\_ She doesn't minimize my difficulties.
- \_\_\_ She doesn't avoid me when I feel low, but reaches out.
- \_\_\_ She is honest with me, even if it's hard for her.
- \_\_\_ She doesn't voice jealousy over what I have that she doesn't.
- \_\_\_ She will take me out for tacos — no questions asked!

Add two other important traits that come to mind:

She... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

She... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now, put a ✓ behind two or three of any of the above traits that you would personally like to improve in terms of *being a friend* to others.

## Lessons on Leading

1. It's inevitable that someone you lead, or someone on your team, may get more attention or praise than you. This drives some people crazy. I've even seen mothers become jealous of the attention their daughters receive. How can we train ourselves to be happy when others receive praise — rather than fall into envy?
2. Sometimes, a leader may knowingly or accidentally treat us unfairly. Do you have what it takes to forge ahead, even though their requests or requirements may not be *just*?
3. Using people as pawns in the game of life (as Saul used his daughters) is a terrible leadership style. How can a leader learn to value and build up each person to achieve their full potential, rather than simply use them?
4. Jonathan didn't hide behind the curtain of impartiality, but sought to find out who was right and who was wrong. When he discovered the truth, he took the appropriate action. Why is this an important task for someone who is in the lead?
5. Leaders need friends too. If you support a leader, how can you improve your loyalty, reliability and trustworthiness?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Share a happy experience you have had in life with a *kindred-spirit* friendship, like David and Jonathan.
2. How would you counsel a woman who admits she has a difficult time rejoicing in the good fortune or wealth of attention that people around her receive? Is there a Scripture you would share?
3. Most people would rather have a root canal than confront someone. Any confrontation is difficult — but it must have been especially difficult for Jonathan to confront his father. How do you know when you simply *must* confront someone this way?
4. Jonathan showed quite a lot of skill in diffusing the escalating situation between Saul and David. Do you think this is a gift that only some people possess, or can you learn to do it as well?
5. Let's say you have a friend, who is dealing with a jealous person like Saul in their life. What advice might you give them? What Scriptures would you tell them to meditate upon?

*A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born for adversity.  
Proverbs 17:17*

## Notes from Teaching on Week 8 —

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## Week Nine — 1 Samuel Chapters 21-22-23

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It's a terrible feeling not to be able to go home. Suddenly, David had nowhere to go, nowhere to hide, nowhere to rest, no one to count on. He couldn't return to his family, both his wife and his best friend were off limits, and it wasn't even safe to be near Samuel. He had turned into a fugitive overnight, only worse — he was a *recognizable* fugitive.

### Day 1:

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#### ✞ READ 1 Samuel 21:1-9 — Seeking Sanctuary

- Name the town where David sought help (v.1): \_\_\_\_\_
- Name the priest who was there (v.1): \_\_\_\_\_

It seems that, after the capture of the Ark from Shiloh, the priests had moved to Nob and set up some semblance of a tabernacle in order to continue their priestly duties, even without the Ark.

- How did David's verbal *story* explain why he was there?
  
- What do you think David *really* wanted?
  
- In v.7, the author seemed to want us to take note of a particular person who was there the day David showed up. Who was this person?

The presence of this man will cause much heartache for this town.

- What items was David able to gather (v.6, 9)?

And, just like that, we're left to sort some things out. David seemed to deceive the priest — was that okay? Ahimelech donated the Holy Bread (that was only to be eaten by the priests) — was that lawful?

We're reminded that the people in God's Story of Redemption aren't easily categorized or compartmentalized. They're not all good or all bad. They are quite a bit like us. But it's not their perfection, their strength or their wits that we are meant to admire. Ultimately, we look at each one to see how they honored God and sought to live in HIS strength.

Tomorrow, we'll learn from David's own words, how he was learning to trust God through these very difficult days.

## *Day 2:*

### READ 1 Samuel 21:10-15 — Into Gath and Out of Gath

Superheroes in Marvel movies would do this — walk right into enemy territory, holding their slain hero's sword! I have to confess, I have no idea what David was hoping to accomplish by going to Gath, but once he was there, and once he realized he was the center of attention and completely outnumbered...

- What brilliant idea did he put into play (v.13)?
  
- What was the result (v.14-15)?

David miraculously escaped from the city of the enemy! We don't know what he was thinking going in; but we DO know what he was thinking going out! David wrote many of the Psalms in our Bible, and **Psalm 34** was actually penned from this moment in his life.

We're going to spend the remainder of our time today in **Psalm 34**, considering the context of when it was written and applying some of the phrases to our own life.

**READ Psalm 34:1-10 —**

- What phrases show that David gave God full credit for his rescue?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What words or phrases of humility do you find?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What do you think it means in **v.5** to '*look to Him*'?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **V.8** says, *taste and see that the Lord is good!* The experience of tasting food is different than merely looking at it. How does David's recent escape from Gath bring meaning to that phrase?

READ Psalm 34:11-22 —

- Who will experience *afflictions* in this life, according to this Psalm — the righteous or the wicked?
  
- What is the outcome when the righteous are afflicted, compared to the outcome when the wicked are afflicted?
  
- Which of these verses are the most relevant to you right now? Write it out here and then explain why you chose that verse:

I wonder if David's answer to the above question might have been: ***Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.*** (v.19) His many afflictions in the remainder of this book were also the tools that God used to fashion a mighty king, who would do according to all that was in God's heart!

*When the righteous cry for help,  
The Lord hears and delivers them  
out of all their troubles. Psalm 34:17*

## Day 3:

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 22:1-5 — The Early Days of David's Mighty Men

- What type of people were drawn to David, while at the cave of Adullam?
- What type of leadership do you think it might have taken to train and command a group like this?
- Why do you think David took his father and mother to Moab?
- What new character is introduced in v.5? \_\_\_\_\_.  
Note: He will serve David for years to come.

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 22:6-23 — A Needless Slaughter at Nob

This was such a tragic story — one that grieved David deeply and showed the truly maniacal nature of Saul.

- If Saul was *sitting* under a tree, seemingly at rest, what does it imply that he had ***his spear in his hand*** (v.6)?

**Verse 8** reveals just how suspicious and unhinged Saul had become — “*No one tells me anything, no one feels sorry for me*” — good grief — that’s middle school stuff!

It had to have been miserable at best, and terrifying at worst, to serve under someone with this level of paranoia. But one man wasn't afraid — Doeg! (It seems to me that he and Saul were kindred spirits.)

- What additional information did Doeg add to his report, beyond David's acquisition of the bread and the sword (**v.10**)?

What a dreadful encounter for Ahimelech to face Saul! The verdict of *treason* had been determined in advance. There would be no reasoning with Saul because he was sure everyone was against him.

- Why do you think the guards *were not* willing to kill the priests?
  
- Why do you think Doeg *was* willing to kill the priests?
  
- Name the one priest who escaped and fled to David: \_\_\_\_\_.  
Note: He will serve David for years to come.

Let's finish by reading one of David's *Cave Psalms* (**#142**). Regardless of whether David wrote this before he heard about Nob or after — it's obvious there was a heavy weight on his shoulders.

**READ Psalm 142** — Consider a *weight* that you may be carrying right now. How can following the pattern of this Psalm in prayer give you strength?

## Day 4:

The first verse of this chapter begins like so many of the chapters in Judges — with Israel's enemies raiding their threshing floors after the hard work of harvesting the grain had been accomplished. It was a cowardly, but effective, form of robbery.

As King of Israel, Saul should have been protecting, or at least avenging, his people against their enemy. Instead, he was obsessed with hunting the only enemy he perceived — David. David, however, was sensitive to his people's trouble and was very much willing to fight their battles.

### ✞ READ 1 Samuel 23:1-14 — David Inquired of the Lord

- What had enabled David to inquire of the Lord (v.6)?
- Do you think it was weakness or wisdom that caused David to ask the Lord twice, before attacking the Philistines (v.2, 4)?

It's difficult to know, but perhaps the incident at Nob had already taught David some important leadership skills.

- When he realized that *Saul was plotting harm against him*, what two specific inquiries did he make of the Lord (v.11-12)?

*Know this my beloved brothers;  
let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak,  
slow to anger. James 1:19*





## Day 5:

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 23:15-18 — Encouragement from a True Friend

At just the right time and at great personal risk, Jonathan stepped into David's life again. He didn't bring weapons, supplies or an army, he brought something much more valuable — encouragement!

- Verse 16 says Jonathan “\_\_\_\_\_ *his hand in* \_\_\_\_\_”

It just doesn't get any better than a friend who strengthens you in the Lord. Jonathan didn't bring happy, wishful thoughts — he didn't spew clichés — he simply reminded David of what he already knew to be true, but may have forgotten.

- In v.17, Jonathan said, “*you shall be* \_\_\_\_\_ *over* \_\_\_\_\_”

David already knew that Samuel anointed him. But, at this point, that probably seemed like a different life. Recent events sure didn't make it look like that was still God's plan.

Read these verses, and note how you might be an encouragement when a friend has lost sight of God's plan:

**Proverbs 18:24**

**Isaiah 49:14-16**

**1 Thessalonians 5:14-15**

**Hebrews 10:23-25**

### 🌀 READ 1 Samuel 23:19-29 — The Constant Pursuit of the Enemy

After playing *ring-around-the-mountain* a few times, the tension was relieved by Saul's hasty withdrawal from the wilderness area. But he would be back to the chase in the beginning of the very next chapter.

Through all of these afflictions in David's life, God was in the business of king-making. If we look carefully, we can see David's character growth in these chapters; but we can *really* see it in his Psalms.

In **Psalm 86**, David lamented about "***insolent men who have risen up against me, a band of ruthless men seeks my life.***" Even as the victim of this unjustifiable hunt, we see David's heart of devotion to God.

#### READ Psalm 86 —

- What phrases indicate David's humility and dependence on God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What phrases indicate that David still wants to please God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What words did David use to describe his knowledge of God's character (even if he didn't *feel* those things in the moment)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Which phrase resonates with you most, especially as you consider times of affliction that you may be experiencing?

## Lessons on Leading

1. Explain how *training-by-affliction* can actually produce a stronger leader:
2. Saul refused to listen to any information that opposed his own opinions — *His mind was made up*. Do you ever struggle with this — forming a strong opinion without taking in new information? How can a leader keep an open mind to new information?
3. David suddenly found himself the leader of 400 men with all sorts of baggage. He eventually turned them into *might men of valor*. How can you learn to trust God for the wisdom you need to lead or work with people you didn't necessarily choose?
4. People can know God's Word, but they can forget God's Word. How does Jonathan's visit of encouragement (**chapter 23**) inspire *you* to remind people close to you of what God has spoken?
5. Saul was King of Israel during these chapters and used all of his *leadership resources* to hunt David. David wasn't King, but used his *slim resources* to fight back the Philistines, who were robbing the threshing floors of Israel. What does this say about each of their leadership styles?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Has God ever spared you from a *close call* (similar to David in Gath)? Did you give Him full credit for delivering you? Explain.
2. David *must have* felt personal regret that so many lives were lost at Nob. We can carry regret when we think we could have prevented someone from getting hurt. Share how dwelling on God's Word can help you overcome those regrets.
3. In **Psalm 142:7**, David wasn't in a real prison, yet he cried, "***bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name!***" What types of mental or emotional *prisons* might a Christian become locked in?
4. Why is it important to humbly seek God's rescue from our *prison* experiences?
5. These chapters can be difficult if you've had a friend or family member in psychosis. Has the Lord revealed anything helpful to you through your study?
6. Describe the irony between Saul's treatment of Nob, in **Chapter 22**, and his actions toward Amalek in **Chapter 15**? What does this reveal about Saul's real priorities?





## Week Ten — 1 Samuel Chapters 24-25

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*"I know that God loves me and all,  
I just don't know how much more of this I can take!"*

Has a friend ever said that to you? Have *you* ever said those words? Sometimes a difficult season drags on so long, the fatigue gets so overwhelming, that we look for any shortcut we can find to put an end to it! We just want to be DONE with whatever character-building is supposed to be going on.

In this chapter, David came face-to-face with a potential shortcut. All of the sudden, he was presented with a *way out* of his current life-style of hiding in caves! Would he seize the moment?

### *Day 1:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### READ 1 Samuel 24:1-7 — An Opportunity or a Temptation?

A person, whose eyes were adjusted to the darkness of a cave, could easily have seen quite well. But someone just entering the cave from the bright sunlight would struggle to make out anything inside for quite a while. So, it's easy to imagine this scene play out.

- Why were David's men excited about this situation? What do you think they meant for David to do (v.4)?

Certainly, this seemed like the opportunity David had been waiting for — his shortcut to the throne! David always knew the kingdom would be his, he just didn't know when. Maybe this was the moment.

He crept close and actually cut off the corner of Saul's robe. Perhaps it was that exact motion that caused him to realize there was nothing about the situation that felt right.

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When we are going through a trial, our closest friends are sometimes not very good advisors. They love us, they want to see our difficulty eased, and they can sometimes convince us that a *temptation* is really an *opportunity*. In this case, the subtle temptation was for David to avenge himself from the man who had become his enemy. In a word — *revenge*.

**READ Romans 12:18-21.** How do these words relate to what David was facing in this moment?

A good leader needs to not only possess Godly character, but also encourage and expect the same from his/her followers.

- What was the main reason David cited for not seizing the *opportunity* that was before them in **v.6-7**?

**READ 1 Peter 2:18-19.**

- How does this principle relate to David's situation?
  
- How does this same principle relate to your life?

*Never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19*



*When a man's ways please the Lord,  
he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.  
Proverbs 16:7*

- What was the general effect of David's words on Saul?
  
- Based on Saul's request in **v.21**, how many of his glowing comments to David do you think were genuine?

After Saul *praised* David's character for a bit, you might have thought the two of them would have hugged, made up, and headed off into the sunset together. But no...

- Where did Saul go (**v.22**)?
  
- Where did David go (**v.22**)?

The ending of this episode reminds us that there can be a wide chasm between *respect* and *trust* — *forgiveness* and *availability*!

David has proven to us here that it is possible...

- ...to give someone the respect due them because of *rank*, but not entrust yourself to them because of their *character*.
- ...to forgive someone for unfair treatment or wrongs done to you, but not continue to make yourself available to them.

- For what situations in your life might these be useful lessons to apply?

## Day 3:

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The death of a beloved Bible character is always a tender passage.

**Verse 1** says that *all Israel assembled and mourned* for Samuel! Or, did they? I wonder if there may have been a couple hundred certain men in the stronghold near Engedi, who *did not* dare to assemble.

I wonder if the death and memorial service for Samuel re-emphasized to David, just how separated from his people, he had really become. I wonder if he became emotionally vulnerable, as fresh waves of grief, sadness, and frustration tumbled over him. His reaction in this chapter doesn't sound like the same David from the previous chapter.

### READ 1 Samuel 25:1-13 — Tested by a Fool

- Describe the man **Nabal (v.2-3)**:
  
- Describe the woman **Abigail (v.3)**:

David and his men weren't just sharpening knives and telling stories in the caves. They were actively fighting against enemy clans, who would come to raid against Israelite territory — thus protecting the livelihoods of many farmers and herdsman, like Nabal.

In those days, it was customary for those who benefited from this protection to share their resources at harvest or sheep shearing. (Something like our custom of tipping our waiter once we have enjoyed our meal.)

- Describe the manner of request David sent to Nabal (**v.6-8**):

We get a hint that Nabal may have been a sympathizer with Saul (based on his comment in **v.10**). Also, it was mentioned four times in these verses that this incident took place at **Carmel**. Do you remember, from **1 Samuel 15:12**, that Saul had set up a monument to himself at Carmel? Hometown notoriety can build loyalty! At any rate, Nabal had no time nor resources for David.

- Describe David's reaction ( or overreaction) to Nabal's refusal (**v.13**):

We're going to pause our narrative right there in order to take a deep look at David's emotional response:

- What parallels do you see with David's current course, and Saul's previous actions at Nob?
- Read **Ecclesiastes 7:9**. What irony does this verse highlight considering that Nabal's name means *fool* (**v.25**)?
- Do you think emotional distress gives a person a legitimate excuse to overreact?
- What excuses have you used in the past to give full vent to your anger? How is the Holy Spirit convicting you to change?

## Day 4:

God is kind and merciful toward His children. He uses all sorts of things to spare us from both sorrow and guilt — *if we will listen!* In this case, God used a brave servant, and a wise and beautiful woman.

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 25:14-31 — Saved by Kindness and Wisdom

- How did Nabal's servant describe the actual help that David's men had been to them (v.15-16)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How did he characterize Nabal in general (v.17)?

Do you ever get frustrated? So frustrated that you overreact? Yeah, that can happen. Clearly, David and his men had earned their *tip*; but it's not like they were collecting on a contract. David was really asking for a *gift*, and Nabal's refusal generated a disproportionate reaction from David, "...*he (Nabal) has returned me evil for good. God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.*" (v.22)

- Contrast those words with David's generous words toward Saul (who really *had* been treating him treacherously) in the previous chapter. What had changed?

*A man of wrath stirs up strife,  
and one given to anger causes much transgression.  
Proverbs 29:22*

David had *put on* humility when talking with Saul, but *given full vent* to his anger regarding Nabal. This reminds us that we can't rest on yesterday's victories; we're only one day or one choice away from sin.

**READ Colossians 3:8-9.** In the same way that we *get dressed* every morning, how can this verse prepare us, daily, for situations similar to David's, in our own lives?

- From **v.23-31**, note Abigail's body language and phrases that portray her humility, wisdom, and her skill at de-escalating a situation:

*A soft answer  
turns away  
wrath, but a  
harsh word  
stirs up anger.  
Proverbs 15:1*

- What can you learn from her words and actions to apply to similar situations in your own life?

I'm sure that an abundance of food and a beautiful woman went a long way in getting David's attention, but there was one *magic* key that Abigail used to really open the door to his sensibilities. Just like Jonathan, she reminded him once again about what he already knew — that he was to be the *Coming King of Israel*.

- What do you think really sunk in, from **v.30-31**, to turn David from his current course?

## Day 5:

### 🔗 READ 1 Samuel 25:32-44 — David Changed Course

- Explain how and why David chose to accept both Abigail's words and her gifts:

*Blessed be the  
Lord, the God  
of Israel,  
who sent you  
this day to  
meet me!* 25:32

- What words would you use to describe the ability of a person to stop, listen, analyze a potential outcome, and admit to having been on a wrong path?



Can you imagine Abigail's emotions when she came home to see her drunken husband, completely unaware that he and all his servants had been spared from death, because of *her* courage and kindness? What a load of emotions to take to bed that night!

- What was Nabal's ultimate fate (v.37-38)?
  
- What was Abigail's fate (v.42)?

The chasm of both time and geography makes it difficult for us to relate to marriages such as this — and even harder to read about David's first wife being *given to another*. Remember, just because the Bible narrates something doesn't mean it was good, right, ideal, or even okay. It was just the way it was.

David *may* have assumed all of the property of Nabal by marrying Abigail, which may have provided some resources for his final years as a fugitive.

- As a review of this week's lesson, list some of the ways that God was making a king in these chapters through all the trials, tricks, and temptations that David faced:

## Lessons on Leading

1. One crucial lesson a person will need to learn to become a good leader is **respect** and **submission** to authority. We can't expect to receive it from others if we have not trained ourselves to give it.  
—How does this concept fit within marriage and family?  
—How does this concept fit within an organization?
2. As a woman who had a role of leadership in her home, clearly Abigail was approachable, since the servant came right up to her and told his side of the story. How important is it for a leader to be approachable? Are you approachable?
3. Share some of the other positive leadership qualities that Abigail displayed in this story.
4. Humility isn't easy. It requires us to turn our back on pride. Why is humility essential for a leader — especially when trying to appeal to someone to change their mind on a matter?
5. One positive leadership skill that we've often observed in David was his ability to take advice — from Samuel, Jonathan, Abiathar, and now, Abigail. In what ways might you still need to grow in the area of seeking advice from others and acting on their advice?

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Saul's presence in David's cave could have been perceived as either *an opportunity* or *a temptation*. As a Christian, how can you tell the difference between the two?
2. It can be very tough to persevere through a long, difficult season. In what ways can a lengthy trial of some type cause us to give in to temptation? How can we guard ourselves against giving in to temptation?
3. Some people think forgiving someone necessitates continuing a relationship with them. Based on the lessons in these chapters, if an adult friend told you she could not forgive her mother for past abusive words for fear of being hurt again, how would you encourage her?
4. Women can give a lot of excuses why they are *out-of-sorts* — grief, frustration, over-busy, PMS, hurt feelings: you name it. Share a strategy that you have found useful in getting a reign on your emotions and limiting your excuses.
5. What are some of the trials that you have faced in life, that you know God has allowed, to train you to be a better follower of Christ?





## Week Eleven — 1 Samuel Chapters 26-27-28

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As you read today's and tomorrow's passages, you might find them somewhat familiar — they may either remind you of the incident in the cave from last week's lesson — or they may actually remind you of a scene from Robin Hood!

### *Day 1:*

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#### **🔗 READ 1 Samuel 26:1-12 — Sneaking into Saul's Camp**

Last week, we read about David's overreaction at Carmel by taking 400 men to challenge Nabal. Look here at Saul's overreaction!

- How many soldiers did Saul take to find David (v.2)?
- Who snuck into Saul's camp at night (v.7)?
- What special help had God provided for them (v.12)?

Once again, we find that comrades and friends don't always give us the best advice. For one thing, they love us and want the best for us; and for another thing, they may be getting just as tired of our trial as we are!

- Circle which statement describes how you think Abishai viewed the current situation?
  - A) as a God-given opportunity for David to avenge his enemy
  - B) as a temptation to take a shortcut to the throne

*Who can put  
out his hand  
against the  
Lord's anointed  
and be  
guiltless? 26:9*

- How do **v.10-11** declare David's confidence in waiting on the Lord's work in his life?

We need to be careful not to succumb to '*affliction fatigue*' with our family and friends. Other people's trials can fatigue us, and we can falter in our advice because *we're* tired of the situation.

- How can we prepare ourselves to give Godly advice rather than encourage a friend to take a shortcut out of a trial?

## *Day 2:*

This incident is simply storytelling at its best! If you're a Sunday School teacher, I know you'll be *voicing all the parts* in your head!

### **READ 1 Samuel 26:13-25 — Sneaking Out with the King's Spear**

- Who did David taunt and accuse of not keeping an eye on the king (**v.14-16**)? (This is where the Robin Hood voice comes out!)
- Consider the implications of David now possessing the king's spear. How might possession of this spear symbolize power?

- How has this spear been significant in their relationship from the beginning until now?

Holding Saul's spear in his hand, David offered up his familiar defense and Saul offered up his familiar remorse.

- What did Saul ask of David in **v.21**?

David *did not* return with Saul, instead he simply returned his spear.

- Do you think it was right or wrong that David did not go back with Saul and why?

This was the last time that Saul and David saw each other alive. Of course, neither of them knew that at the time and yet, sometimes the Lord causes people to say things that have a profound meaning.

Write the final words from Saul's lips to David, from **v.25**:

*The Lord  
rewards every  
man for his  
righteousness  
and his  
faithfulness. 26:23*

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## Day 3:

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Discouragement is a deadly foe. Have you ever crawled down into a hole of discouragement? If you have, you know that pessimism tends to crawl down with you. And, pessimism doesn't just sit quietly beside you — it always wants to strike up a conversation. It tells you things like: *'this is your life now — nothing will ever change — it can't change, because God has either forgotten you or He has turned His back on you.'*

As we study these chapters that show what discouragement looked like on David, it may help us see just how destructive it can be in our own life.

### READ 1 Samuel 27:1-12 — Moving in with the Enemy

- Explain what David began to believe was his only way to escape an inevitable capture by Saul (v.1):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why do you think he may have come to this conclusion? What role did discouragement play in his decision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What town did David initially settle in, and why was that significant (v.3)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What town did the ruler of the Philistines ultimately give him and his men to live in (v.6)?

- How long did this detour into Philistine territory last (v.7)?

Interestingly, v.8 says David was raiding the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. These clans were enemies of Israel, but not necessarily enemies of the Philistines. This explains two things:

- 1) why David left no survivors to tell about his activities,
- 2) why his report to Achish was vague and intentionally gave the impression that he had been raiding Israelite territory.

The immediate result of David's actions was that he gained the trust of his enemy. The unintended consequence was that he became comfortable living a lie.

- Once we become comfortable in our *compromise* or *double-mindedness*, what spiritual dangers do we face?

David had gone from fervent trust in God, while holding Saul's spear on the hill, to taking matters into his own hands, while living in Ziklag.

- What may have caused that to happen for David?
  
- How can that happen in your own life, and how can you guard against it?

## Day 4:

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A handful of today's verses tell us about the Philistines' plans and progress toward making war against Israel. Then the bulk of the chapter tells us about Saul's panicked attempt to find some reassurance that this battle would end well. SPOILER ALERT: He never found that assurance.

### READ 1 Samuel 28:1-14 — An Unauthorized Séance

The gathering forces of the Philistines must have been the biggest threat that Saul had ever faced. We can sense his fear and dread, and maybe even figure out why he was so desperate to talk to Samuel once again.

Samuel was dead, but while he lived, he said some pretty encouraging things about the kingship in general, and Saul specifically.

Read **1 Samuel 9:15-17 and 10:1**.

Saul could use a little encouragement like that right about now — but, like we said, Samuel was dead.

- From **v.6**, what was Saul's first unsuccessful attempt to gather divine information?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- From **v.7**, what was his second attempt?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why did he go to En-dor in disguise?

- Describe the medium’s response at the arrival of the spirit of Samuel. How do you think she may have suddenly known that her customer was Saul (v.12)?

The Mosaic Law forbade, as abominations, mediums and necromancers, who consult the spirits of the dead, as well as other forms of divination (Lev.19:31, 20:6; Deut. 18:10-12). These forms of divination were common throughout the ancient Near East. Biblical religion is the only one known to forbid it. By driving out the mediums, Saul had certainly tried to be faithful to the Lord in his own way. — ESV Study Bible <sup>1</sup>

## Day 5:

Fear can be a positive, God-given motivator when it keeps us safe from harmful situations; but it can also become a demanding and dreadful motivator that can propel us into blatant disobedience. I think the latter was the case with Saul.

### 🔪 READ 1 Samuel 28:15-25 — Samuel’s Word of Doom

- What reason did Samuel give for God not speaking to Saul (v.16-18)?

Read **1 Samuel 15:26-28** to refresh your memory. Don’t you find that fascinating? Saul seemed to have conveniently set aside *that* message from Samuel.

- What insight into the coming battle did Samuel give (v.19)?

- Like any self-respecting (and somewhat practical) Jewish woman, how did this medium attempt to revive Saul, after he had heard Samuel's words?

The weight of responsibility on Saul's shoulders must have been crushing. In order to make good decisions, leaders need good information. Unfortunately, the thing that Saul wanted most from the Lord was just that — information, direction, and help. The thing that God wanted most from Saul was obedience and devotion.

When Saul tried everything he knew of to get information from God, he was met with silence. We can face times when God seems silent as well. In some cases, He may be bidding us to *wait on Him* for a good reason; but in other cases, He may be *waiting on us* to confess our sin, abandon our pride and renew our devotion to Him.

Read these passages. Note how their instruction may have changed Saul's life, and how they inspire you to change your life!

**Psalm 32:1-7**

**Proverbs 28:13-14**

**Daniel 9:3-10**

## Lessons on Leading

Today's *Lesson on Leading* will focus exclusively on **character!** Every leader needs Godly character. Neither time nor crisis necessarily form Godly character — but both can reveal it, or a lack of it.

In this lesson, both David and Saul faced adversities. Whenever adversity enters a person's path, it will either build character through obedience, or reinforce instability through compromise.

Here are a few aspects of character that can be built through obedience:

1. Godly character is **more than words** — A leader who takes action in line with their words is someone who can be trusted, someone whom others will respect and be loyal to.
2. Godly character is **more than talent or gifting** — Some people are given an advantage in circumstance, ability, even appearance, (like both Saul and David); but any gift or ability must be surrendered to the Lord's use, for Him to breathe life into it. No one wants to follow a gifted fool.
3. Godly character **rises above limitations** — Regardless of ability or gifting, we will face situations that limit our success. The ability to discern the difference between boundaries, put in place by the Lord or potential areas of influence that require perseverance, is a sign of a Godly leader.
4. Godly character **values the giftings of others** — Even among the greatest men and women of the Bible, none were self-sufficient. Moses leaned on Aaron; Joshua fought with Caleb; David and Saul both valued Samuel. A Godly leader values the input of those people whom God has given them.
5. Godly character **goes beyond a title** — Remember the military phrase, '*Salute the rank, not the man*'? We may wear many hats and have many titles — *mother, teacher, coach, counselor* — but if we cease to depend on the Lord to live up to the best aspects of those titles, we won't flourish as a leader.

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Since David had been *on-the-run* for so long, he had no opportunity to gather with his people in worship. How may this have played into his discouragement, and subsequent fleeing to Gath? How does lack of worship and fellowship affect people today?
2. David was able to sneak in and steal Saul's spear because God worked in the background, causing a deep sleep over the army. What are some of the ways that God may be working in the background in your life that you haven't given much thought to?
3. The author was clear that *mediums* and *seances* were off limits for God's people. How would you counsel a young person who was dabbling in the dark world? What words do you think might be persuasive?
4. Saul's treatment of David was unjustified. David had only been trying to do what God had set before him. Perhaps, you've experienced similar unfair treatment. How can a situation like that inspire you to treat others with more value?

David has disappointed us by tumbling off his pedestal as the **Godly Coming King** for Israel. But it's okay, because David was only meant to serve as a *type* of the **Glorious Coming King**. There is only one **Coming King**, who will not fail us and who will do according to all that His Father has in mind. The world would still need to wait about one millennium from David's time until that King would be revealed.







## Week Twelve — 1 Samuel Chapters 29-30-31

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After following that crazy side story in En-dor, we need to refresh ourselves on the political front. Achish and his Philistine army, and David and his small army, were all marching north together for an ultimate face off with Israel.

David seemed to have won over Achish. We wonder what his plan was, because every step he took brought him closer to either betraying Achish or betraying Israel — you can't fight for both sides!

### Day 1:

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#### READ 1 Samuel 29:1-11— The Day that God Intervened

Note on the map how far north of the normal Philistine territory Achish's army was headed. Perhaps this played into Saul's terror that they really meant business this time.

- Who did God use to *excuse* David from his military assignment (v.4-7)?
  
- So as to not '*step out of character,*' how did David pretend to feel about being *sent home* (v.8)?

And just like that — David was off the hook from having to betray either group. God had intervened, even when David had been foolish.

- How has God mercifully intervened in your life when you didn't deserve it, or when you had actually been disobedient? Consider sharing with your group.

## *Day 2:*

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Just yesterday, we were thinking about times when God intervened in our lives — even when we didn't deserve it. **Chapter 29** showed how God intervened for David, and now **Chapter 30** seems to show the opposite. Where was God when the men were away from their families at Ziklag? Why didn't He protect their families?

### **📖 READ 1 Samuel 30:1-6 — The Day that God Didn't Intervene**

- Note how many days David and his men had been traveling back to Ziklag (**v.1**):
- What people group had raided the town (**v.1**)?
- Describe how the Amalekite's raid on Israel differed from David's raids on the Amalekites (**v.2** and **27:8-9**).
- What assumptions do you think David's men may have made when they came to Ziklag?
- Write some of the words and phrases that describe their emotional state (**v.4-6**):

The fatigue of their journey may have contributed to everyone's weakened emotional stamina. Their surprise, coupled with sadness, fueled irrational anger, which led to violent threats against David.

When people face trauma, logic often disappears. In this instance, logic should have suggested they needed a strong leader about now. Instead, they were threatening to stone their leader.

This was the lowest of lows for David. He hit his emotional limit. The chaos caused by the enemy had ushered in personal grief, the wounds of his friends had left him raw, and his resources were thinned to what he was carrying on his back.

And, in all of that bitterness, we find nine of the most useful words in all of the Bible. Write the last nine words from **v.6**:

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In my estimation, this is the most substantial turning point in David's life. He was always a man who knew how to reach up to God for strength; but, after living with the enemy for a year and a half, after giving up hope that God remembered, and now after (supposedly) losing wives and children, David had nothing left but God.

Read **Psalm 55**. Nothing about this Psalm pins it to this exact time in David's life, but everything about this Psalm depicts a person who has determined to *strengthen themselves in the Lord*.

- Which types of these honest emotions can you relate to from this Psalm?


*But David  
strengthened  
himself in  
the Lord  
his God. 30:6*

- How does the earnest desire of the Psalmist inspire you?
- What type of outcome does the Psalmist hope for?
- How might a Psalm like this *strengthen* someone in despair?

### *Day 3:*

📖 READ 1 Samuel 30:7-15 — God's Providence, an Egyptian

- After David was strengthened in the Lord, his first task was to seek God's counsel. How did he do that (v.7-8)?
- How did stumbling upon a random Egyptian in the open country prove to be divine providence?

 READ 1 Samuel 30:16-31 — Share and Share Alike

- Describe the outcome when David's men found the Amalekite camp:

**Verse 21** tells how the fighting men were reunited with the exhausted men, who had stayed at the Brook Besor. Remember, all these men had marched 3 days after leaving Achish's side; they had endured a major emotional toll when they came into Ziklag, and then they went out with David to avenge their loss. It's a wonder that *any of them* went on.

- What was the basis of the objection to sharing the spoils evenly, between the fighters and the protectors (v.22)?
  
- What was David's view on the situation (v.23-25)?
  
- Additionally, how did David further share the spoils with people who had nothing whatsoever to do with the situation (v.26-31)?
  
- How do you think that could have been wise?

## Day 4:

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Things ended well for David and his men, as they recovered their possessions from the Amalekites in the south; but things were not ending well as Saul and his sons were battling the Philistines in the north. This is a sad chapter, not just because Saul died, but because Saul had wasted so much potential while he lived!

### 📖 READ 1 Samuel 31:1-7 — Saul Fell Slain

- What words or phrases indicate that, even while facing death, Saul was most concerned about his image (v.3-4)?
  
- What effect did Saul's death have on the rest of the men of Israel (v.7)?

While Samuel was still alive, he prophesied that Saul's kingdom would be given to another — read **1 Samuel 15:28**.

When Samuel was brought up from the grave, he prophesied again that Saul's kingdom would be given to another, and that Saul and his sons only had one day left on earth — read **1 Samuel 28:17-19**.

- What had Saul learned about the outcome of the current battle from Samuel in the above passage?
  
- What reason was given (a second time) in the above passage for this outcome?

It happened just the way Samuel said. Saul and his sons perished in the battle, the kingdom was ready for a new leader, but the sheep of Israel were temporarily battered and scattered.

### 🌀 READ 1 Samuel 31:8-13 — Honoring the Dead

What a gruesome portion of Scripture! I imagine the Philistines were delighted to have harvested these artifacts, as visual aids for their public relations campaign.

- As an interesting note, read **1 Chronicles 10:10**. Where did they display Saul's head?
- Where did they display his armor?

Now, listen to these poignant words from Alfred Edersheim, regarding the display of Saul's body...

*“And now it was night; and the headless bodies of Saul and his sons, deserted by all, swung in the wind on the walls of Bethshan, amid the hoarse music of vultures and jackals.”<sup>4</sup>*

But one bright and brave scene yet remained — a heroic recovery by a certain clan of grateful men. They owed their freedom to Saul's leadership when Nahash the Ammonite threatened to enslave them. (Review **1 Samuel 11**)

- Who were these men and what did they accomplish (v.11)?

With that final act of bravery, we find some satisfaction that a small amount of reverence had been paid to the man, who was not all bad, nor all good. Saul lived just like us, possessing the capacity for both.





## Lessons on Leading

The life of *any* leader can be lonely. For our purposes, *a leader* means someone who is responsible for another (like a mother); someone who gives instruction (like a teacher); someone who supervises (like a boss); or simply someone who is looked up to (like an older woman).

Not every decision you make will be the right one. A good leader is humble and realizes blunders. She is able to admit mistakes, and even ask for forgiveness when necessary.

One universal characteristic of leading is that it can be relatively lonely — but we must remember, like David, we can strengthen ourselves in the Lord!

1. David's men wanted to kill him, but they were really mad at God. When people are mad at God, they are often mad at His leaders. (parents, pastors, teachers). How can you learn to not take this personally and strengthen yourself in the Lord, like David did?
2. God is always molding His children into His image — some will conform, while others will refuse. He often uses difficulties and challenges in this shaping process. How can you better yield to the molding that God may be doing right now in your life?
3. What is the #1 *Lesson on Leading* that God has shown you through this study of 1 Samuel?

*For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.  
Hosea 6:6*

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. What does the phrase, "*To obey is better than sacrifice,*" mean in your personal life?
2. If Saul had destroyed the Amalekites as instructed, how might this whole story have been different?
3. Do you personally think that David had the right idea to share the spoils with those who didn't personally fight? Why or why not?
4. Why was it gracious of the men of Jabesh-Gilead to honor Saul's body, even though his life wasn't exactly characterized as noble?
5. How can you honor the life of someone (whether living or dead) who wasn't fantastic all the time — maybe they even made your life difficult because of their disobedience?
6. Discuss the relationship between obedience and victory, which are two important themes throughout **1 Samuel**.





## REFERENCES

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## Women of the Word Bible Studies

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The following WOW Bible Studies written by Sue LeBoutillier are available through the **Calvary Chapel Ontario bookstore**, and through our online store at [www.ccontario.com](http://www.ccontario.com).

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- **Philippians** — Finding Joy in a Disjointed World
- **Colossians** — Finding Stability in a Changing World
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- **1 & 2 Peter** — Hope, Holiness and Humility in a Hostile World
- **1,2,3 John** — Light, Love and Logic, Lessons from the Apostle John

