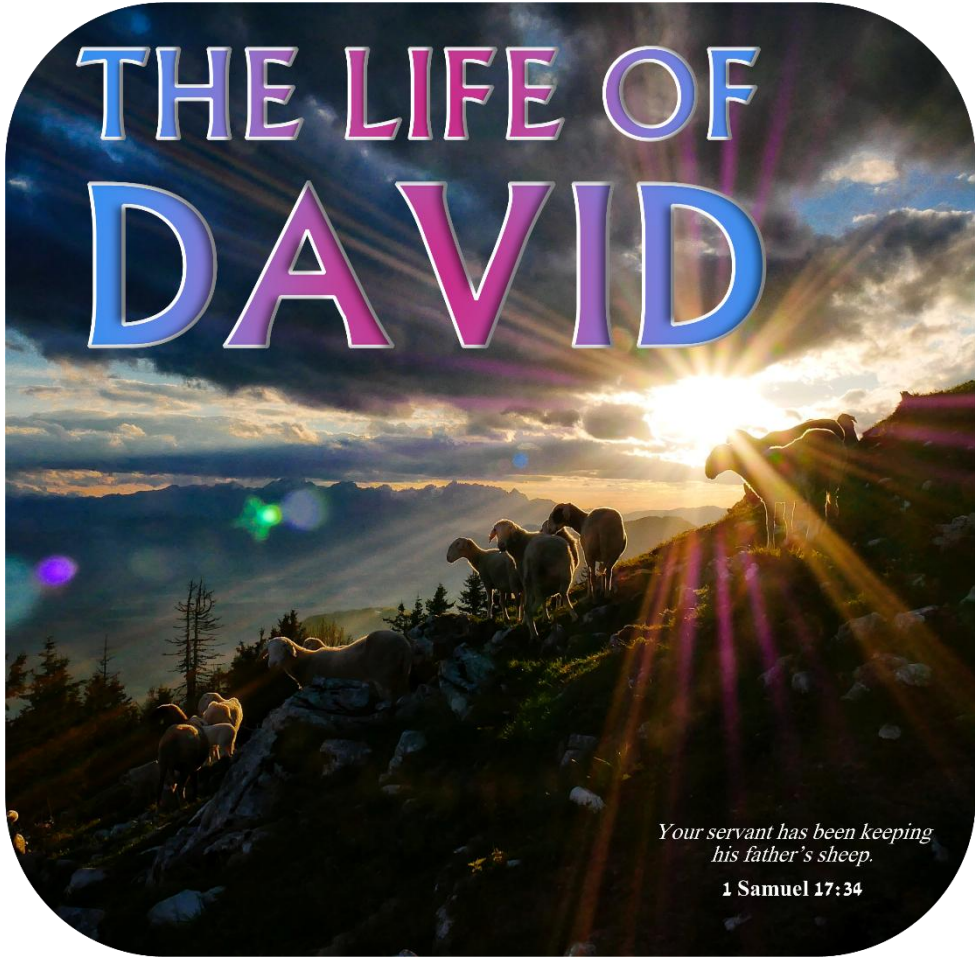


# THE LIFE OF DAVID



*Your servant has been keeping  
his father's sheep.*

**1 Samuel 17:34**

## MAN AFTER GODS OWN HEART (14 BIBLE STUDIES)

**EXAMINATION APPLICATION**  
**BIBLE STUDIES**

# CONTENTS

Contents	page 02
Getting the most out of these studies	page 03
Introducing “The Life of David”	page 04
Outline by Mike Treneer (From 1&2 Sam, 1 Chronicles & Psalms)	pages 05-09
Study 1: 1 Samuel 13-16 – The Lord Looks at the Heart	pages 10-11
Study 2: 1 Samuel 17 – The Lords Battle and Victory	pages 12-13
Study 3: 1 Samuel 20 – True Friendship	pages 14-15
Study 4: 1 Samuel 25 – Finding Security in the Lord	pages 16-17
Study 5: 1 Samuel 30 – Finding Strength at Rock Bottom	pages 18-19
Study 6: 1 Samuel 31:1-2 Samuel 2:7 – Changing of the guard	pages 20-21
Study 7: 2 Samuel 6 – God’s Wrath and Blessing	pages 22-23
Study 8: 2 Samuel 7 – An Amazing Promise	pages 24-25
Study 9: 2 Samuel 11-12 – Facing Temptation	pages 26-27
Study 10: 2 Samuel 13-14 – Reaping what you Sow	pages 28-29
Study 11: 2 Samuel 15-16 – Absalom’s Conspiracy	pages 30-31
Study 12: 2 Samuel 18-19 – Absalom’s Death	pages 32-33
Study 13: 2 Samuel 22 – An Awesome God	pages 34-35
Study 14: 2 Samuel 23:1-1 Kings 2:10 – Passing the Baton	pages 36-37
Additional Quotes	pages 38-39
Memory Verses	page 40

## THE SMALL PRINT

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## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THESE STUDIES

### Your Commitment

I would encourage you to make a commitment to attending your group regularly. I realise that sometimes there are things that get in the way, but do prioritise studying the Bible with other. This will involve sacrifice, and effective use of your time, but I really believe that in doing so you will get the most out of studying the Bible and praying together in your small group.

### Your Contribution

What you put into the group is going to determine what you get out of the group. I encourage you to contribute honestly to the discussion and workings of the group. I understand people come from different backgrounds with unique personalities & life experiences. But, we all have a big part to play, so I encourage you to be fully present and take ownership of your group.

### Your Preparation

These materials are primarily for use in preparing and/or leading group discussions, but they will also be useful in keeping your thoughts together in one place. The materials provide you with the passage so that you can identify and highlight recurring themes and note down your own thoughts and questions. Also, the materials include questions designed to provoke thought, and help you reflect on what the passage meant, both at the time it was written, and also what it means for us now.

I would encourage you to make good use of these materials, as doing so will help you contribute and get the most out of the group discussions. The materials are, however, only “tools” – they are there to help you, and not to restrict you, or force you to think in a certain manner. I want to see God speaking to you through these passages, and if the questions or notes don't help you, simply don't use them!

I have also included within these materials an introduction to the book. Make of this what you will, but I hope that it is helpful in getting you started with these studies!

### Your Leadership

Here are some useful pointers in how to lead your Bible study group. Be aware that included in this study guide are more questions than you can possibly ask and/or answer in one session. They are not designed to be used rigidly, and there will rarely be a need to ask every question! Make sure that you spend some time praying at the start and ensure you read & re-read the passages as much as possible. In relation to the passages, then consider the suggested questions with an open mind. There is rarely “a single right answer” and I would encourage you to share your thoughts with your group.

I have also included a number of quotations from relevant Christian literature, most of which are readily available online if you want to do further thinking or study. My prayer is that as you study together you would grow to love Jesus and experience Him more deeply.

I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to make these materials even better!

*Steve McClure  
Spring 2019*

## INTRODUCING “THE LIFE OF DAVID”

I always find it amazing to delve into the Old Testament and study one of its key characters. If you are using this booklet, let me say that David is a great choice because there is more about him than any other individual in the Bible (approximately 139 chapters and much of it is his own writings). It's not merely a story, but a lot of it is David himself, telling us what it was like and sharing his experiences. In this series, we're going to look at David's life and what it might mean to experience God over a lifetime. We can learn a lot from a doing a character study, but we must be careful to set the story in its right context. We will aim to do that, and as we do so, we trust that there will be plenty of challenges to apply what we are learning to our own lives.

Quite simply David is the greatest King Israel ever had. He is also a very tragic story. We first meet David when things had not been going well with King Saul. Samuel is sent to anoint a new King – he is sent to Jesse who has eight sons. The first seven are rejected and the one who had been overlooked, the one who was not even invited to the party; namely a young, perhaps only 13-year-old David is chosen to be King. God declares him to be a man after his own heart. Next, we have the story of Goliath, a giant warrior from their arch enemy, the Philistines. With only 5 stones this shepherd boy defeats this great warrior with God's help. Around 17 years later, after a period of civil war and many years in the wilderness (building character), David finally takes the throne from Saul, initially in the South, and then 7 years later across all Israel. David unites Israel and chooses to make Jerusalem, which is slap bang in the middle, its capital city. David offers to build a house for God, but God says no. Instead, God says he is going to build a house for David: God is going to build the nation of Israel through his family line. Moreover, one of his descendants would one day come to save the world.

The second half of David's life did not go so well. Most famously there is the story of Bathsheba. David sees her bathing on a nearby rooftop. He wants her, sends for her and ends up getting her pregnant. Then to cover up his mess, he gets himself into a dangerous web of lies and has Bathsheba's husband Uriah killed in battle. After God's rebuke David is incredibly sorry! After that there are also lots of stories about David's children. Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar. In revenge, Absalom ends up killing Amnon and then ends up challenging David for the throne. A fierce battle follows until David eventually wins through. This was supposed to be the golden age of Israel – the largest geographic expanse they ever experienced and yet David's story, here on earth at least, ends after these tragedies. Even at his death, two of his sons were fighting for the crown which eventually passes to Solomon.

What I do like about David's story is that it is so real. There is no hiding, and we see his life warts-and-all. David is someone we can all identify with – he is not always the hero and he does not always get it right! It feels like there was little hardship that David did not have to face. Some of this, he brought on himself, but the thing that helped him through it all, was his relationship with God. Through David's life we see that God used him powerfully in the lives of His people. I find the story of his life an inspiration to continue following Jesus. For not only do we have the history, but around half the Psalms are written by David also. They record much of his life with God, both in the good times, and in the hard times.

As you work through these studies, I pray that you will encounter God in the kind of way that David did, and that God will find in you, a man or woman after His own heart.

*Steve McClure, Spring 2019*

**Compiled by Mike Treneer, Former President of the International Navigators**

*"He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them." Psalm 78:70-72*

**c 1040 B.C.**

**DAVID BORN (Ruth 4:13-22; 1 Chronicles 2:13-17)**

The great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:13-22)

The seventh or eighth son of Jesse of Bethlehem (1 Chron. 2:13-17 and 1 Sam. 16:1-13)

**DAVID'S RISE TO FAME (1 Samuel 16:1 - 18:30)**

- David, the shepherd (1 Sam. 16:1-17:58)
  - David anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:1-13)
  - David plays the harp at Saul's court (1 Sam. 16:14-23)
  - David fights Goliath (1 Sam. 17:1-58)
- David, the army captain (1 Sam. 18:1-30)
  - Jonathan's love for David (1 Sam. 18:1-4)
  - Saul's jealousy of David (1 Sam. 18:5-9)
  - Saul throws his spear at David (1 Sam. 18:10-15)
  - David and Saul's daughters (1 Sam. 18:16-30)

**DAVID ON THE RUN FROM SAUL (1 Samuel 19:1 - 26:25)**

- Jonathan and Michal protect David from Saul (1 Sam. 19:1-20:42)
  - Jonathan dissuades Saul from killing David (1 Sam. 19:1-7)
  - David dodges Saul's spear for the 2nd time (1 Sam. 19:8-10)
  - David escapes from his house (1 Sam. 19:11-17; Psalm 59)
  - David flees to Samuel (1 Sam. 19:18-24)
  - David seeks Jonathan's help (1 Sam. 20:1-42)
- David on his own (1 Sam. 21:1-15)
  - David lies to Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21:1-9)
  - David feigns madness at Gath (1 Sam. 21:10-15; Psalms 34 and 56)
- David and his band of discontents (1 Sam. 22:1-26:25)
  - David flees to Adullam, Moab and Hereth (1 Sam. 22:1-5; Psalm 142)
  - Saul kills the priests at Nob for helping David (1 Sam. 22:6-23; Psalm 52)
  - Three of David's men bring him water from Bethlehem (1 Chron. 11:15-19)
  - David and his band protect Keilah (1 Sam. 23:1-13)
  - Jonathan comes to David in the Desert of Ziph (1 Sam. 23:14-18; Psalm 63)
  - The Ziphites betray David to Saul (1 Sam. 23:19-29; Psalm 54)
  - David spares Saul's life in a cave at Engedi (1 Sam. 24; Psalm 57)
  - Men from Gad and Benjamin defect to David (1 Chron. 12:8-12)
  - David in the Desert of Maon—the meeting with Abigail (1 Sam. 25)
  - David and Abishai creep into Saul's camp at Ziph (1 Sam. 26)

**1012 B.C. David aged 28**

## **DAVID AT ZIKLAG AMONG THE PHILISTINES (1 Samuel 27:1 - 2 Samuel 1:27)**

- David takes refuge with the Philistines (1 Sam. 27:1-12)
  - David and his 600 men and their families go to Achish (1 Sam. 27:1-4)
  - David is given the town of Ziklag by Achish (1 Sam. 27:5-12)
  - More men defect to David at Ziklag (1 Chron. 12:1-7)
- War between Israel and the Philistines (1 Sam. 28:1-29:11)
  - David expected to fight for the Philistines (1 Sam. 28:1-2)
  - Saul overcome with fear (1 Sam. 28:3-6)
  - Saul consults the medium at Endor (1 Sam. 28:7-25)
  - The Philistine chiefs object to David marching with them (1 Sam. 29:1-5)
  - Achish sends David back to Ziklag (1 Sam. 29:6-11)
  - More defectors join David from Manasseh (1 Chron. 12:19-22)
- The Amalekite raid on Ziklag (1 Sam. 30:1-30)
  - The raid discovered (1 Sam. 30:1-6)
  - The initiative recovered (1 Sam. 30:7-15)
  - The families rescued (1 Sam. 30:16-31)
- The deaths of Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. 31:1 - 2 Sam. 1:27)
  - Israel routed at Mt. Gilboa, Saul and Jonathan killed (1 Sam. 31:1-13)
  - The news of their deaths reaches David at Ziklag (2 Sam. 1:1-16)
  - David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17-27)

### **c 1010 B.C. David aged 30**

## **DAVID AS KING OVER JUDAH AT HEBRON (2 Samuel 2:1 - 5:5)**

- Rival kings chosen (2 Sam. 2:1-11)
  - The tribe of Judah anoint David as king at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:1-7)
  - Saul's son Ishbosheth anointed king over Israel (2 Sam. 2:8-11)
- Civil war between David and the house of Saul (2 Sam. 2:12 - 4:12)
  - Victory for David's men at Gibeon (2 Sam. 2:12-32)
  - The sons born to David at Hebron (2 Sam. 3:1-5)
  - The split between Ishbosheth and Abner (2 Sam. 3:6-21)
  - The murder of Abner by Joab (2 Sam. 3:22-39)
  - The murder of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 4:1-12)
  - Men from all Israel rally to David at Hebron (1 Chron. 12:23-40)

### **c 1003 B.C. David aged 37**

## **DAVID AS KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AT JERUSALEM (2 Sam 5:6 - 9:1 (also 1 Chron 11:1 - 18:17)**

- David established as king of all Israel (2 Sam. 5:1-25; Psalm 18)
  - David anointed king over Israel (2 Sam. 5:1-5; 1 Chron. 11:1-3)
  - David captures Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6-14 and 1 Chron. 11:4-9)
  - David twice defeats the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:15-25; 1 Chron. 14:8-17)
- David brings the Ark of God to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:1-7:29; 1 Chron. 15:1-17:27)
  - The first attempt and the death of Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:1-11; 1 Chron. 13:1-14)
  - The Ark enters Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-19; 1 Chron. 15:1-16:43)
  - The break with Michal (2 Sam. 6:20-23; 1 Chron. 15:29)
  - The idea for the temple (2 Sam. 7:1-3; 1 Chron. 17:1-2)

- God's response to David (2 Sam. 7:4-17; 1 Chron. 17:3-15)
- David's prayer (2 Sam. 7:18-29; 1 Chron. 17:16-27)
- David's victories over his enemies (2 Sam. 8:1-10; 1 Chron. 18:1-13; Psalm 60)
  - David subdues the Philistines (2 Sam. 8:1; 1 Chron. 18:1) ...
  - David defeats the Moabites (2 Sam. 8:2; 1 Chron. 18:2)
  - David defeats Hadadezer of Zobah (2 Sam. 8:3-4; 1 Chron. 18:3-4)
  - David defeats the Arameans of Damascus (2 Sam. 8:5-8; 1 Chron. 18:5-8)
  - David receives gifts from the king of Hamath (2 Sam. 8:9-10; 1 Chron. 18:9-11)
- David's fame and generosity (2 Sam. 8:11-9:13)
  - David dedicates the spoils and gifts to the Lord (2 Sam. 8:11-12)
  - David's fame and military strength (2 Sam. 8:13-14; 1 Chron. 14:17)
  - David's justice (2 Sam. 8:15)
  - David's officials (2 Sam. 8:16-18; 1 Chron. 18:14-17)
  - David's generosity to Jonathan's son Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9:1-13)
  - Possibly about 995 B.C. (2 Sam. 4:4; 9:12)

### **c 994 B.C. David aged about 46**

#### **DAVID'S TRAGIC FAILURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (2 Samuel 10:1 - 15:6)**

- War, adultery and murder (2 Sam. 10:1-11:27)
  - Joab fights the Ammonites (2 Sam. 10:1-19; 1 Chron. 19:1-19)
  - David commits adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-5)
  - David attempts a cover up (2 Sam. 11:6-13)
  - David arranges the death of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband (2 Sam. 11:14-25)
  - David marries Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:26-27)
- Repentance, recovery and victory (2 Sam. 12:1-31)
  - Nathan confronts David (2 Sam. 12:1-12)
  - David's repentance (2 Sam. 12:13-23; Psalm 51)
  - The birth of Solomon (2 Sam. 12:24-25)
  - Possibly about 992 B.C.\*
  - Victory over the Ammonites (2 Sam. 12:26-31)
- Incest, murder and rebellion (2 Sam. 13:1 - 15:6)
  - David's son Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-22)
  - Possibly about 991 B.C.\*
  - Absalom, Tamar's brother kills Amnon and flees (2 Sam. 13:23-39)
  - Possibly about 989 B.C. (2 Sam. 13:23)
  - Joab persuades David to allow Absalom's return (2 Sam. 14:1-33)
  - Possibly about 986 B.C. (2 Sam. 13:38)
  - Absalom plots rebellion (2 Sam. 15:1-6)
  - Possibly about 980 B.C. (2 Sam. 14:28; 15:7)

### **c. 980 B.C.(?)\* David aged about 60**

#### **DAVID FLEES FROM ABSALOM'S REBELLION (2 Samuel 15:7 - 20:25)**

- David flees from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:13-16:14; Psalm 3)
  - Leaving Jerusalem and the commitment of Ittai the Gittite (2 Sam. 15:13-22)
  - Crossing the Kidron and sending the ark back to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:23-29)

- Climbing the Mount of Olives and planning with Hushai (2 Sam. 15:30-37)
- Ziba slanders Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 16:1-4)
- Shimei curses David (2 Sam. 16:5-14)
- David's friend Hushai outwits the counsellor Ahithophel (2 Sam. 16:15 - 17:29)
  - Hushai feigns allegiance to Absalom (2 Sam. 16:15-19)
  - Ahithophel's advice to Absalom (2 Sam. 16:20-17:4)
  - Hushai's advice preferred to Ahithophel's (2 Sam. 17:5-14)
  - Hushai sends a message to David (2 Sam. 17:15-21)
  - Ahithophel's suicide and David's escape to Mahanaim (2 Sam. 17:22-29)
- Absalom defeated and killed (2 Sam. 18:1-19:8)
  - David's men defeat the army of Israel (2 Sam. 18:1-8)
  - Joab kills Absalom (2 Sam. 18:9-18)
  - Runners bring the news to David (2 Sam. 18:19-32)
  - David mourns for Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33-19:4)
  - Joab rebukes David (2 Sam. 19:5-8)
- David magnanimous in his victory and restoration (2 Sam. 19:9-40)
  - David wins over Judah and Absalom's general Amasa (2 Sam. 19:9-15)
  - David refuses to punish Shimei (2 Sam. 19:16-23)
  - Reconciliation with Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 19:24-30)
  - David blesses Barzillai (2 Sam. 19:31-40)
- Sheba's rebellion (2 Sam. 19:41 - 20:25)
  - Trouble between the men of Judah and the men of Israel (2 Sam. 19:41-43)
  - Sheba the Benjamite leads the men of Israel in rebellion (2 Sam. 20:1-5)
  - Joab murders the new army commander Amasa (2 Sam. 20:6-13)
  - Joab crushes the revolt (2 Sam. 20:14-26)

### **DAVID'S FINAL YEARS (2 Samuel 21:1 - 1 Kings 2:11 (also 1 Chronicles 20:4 - 29:30))**

- Three years of famine (2 Sam. 21:1)
- The appeasing of the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21:1-14)
- Battles with the Philistines (2 Sam. 21:15-22; 1 Chron. 20:4-8)
- David "Israel's singer of songs" (2 Sam. 22:1 - 23:7)
- David's mighty men (2 Sam. 23:8-39; 1 Chron. 11:10-47)
- David numbers Israel (2 Sam. 24:1-25; 1 Chron. 21:1-22:1)
  - David's command and Joab's opposition (2 Sam. 24:1-9)
  - The plague that resulted (2 Sam. 24:10-17)
  - David builds an altar (2 Sam. 24:18-25)
- Adonijah's attempt for the throne (1 Kings 1:1-53)
  - Abishag looks after David (1 Kings 1:1-4)
  - Adonijah conspires for the throne (1 Kings 1:5-10)
  - Nathan and Bathsheba warn David (1 Kings 1:11-27)
  - David swiftly has Solomon anointed (1 Kings 1:28-53; 1 Chron 23:1)
- The co-regency between David and Solomon (1 Chron. 22:1 - 29:25)
  - David's organisation of the Kingdom (1 Chron. 23:1 - 27:34)
  - David charges Solomon to build the temple (1 Chron. 28:1-21; 22:2-19)
  - David raises the funds for the temple (1 Chron. 29:1-9)



David's prayer of thanksgiving (1 Chron. 29:10-20; Psalm 30)  
 Solomon acknowledged as King (1 Chron. 29:21-25 )  
 David's final charge to Solomon (1 Kings 2:1-9)

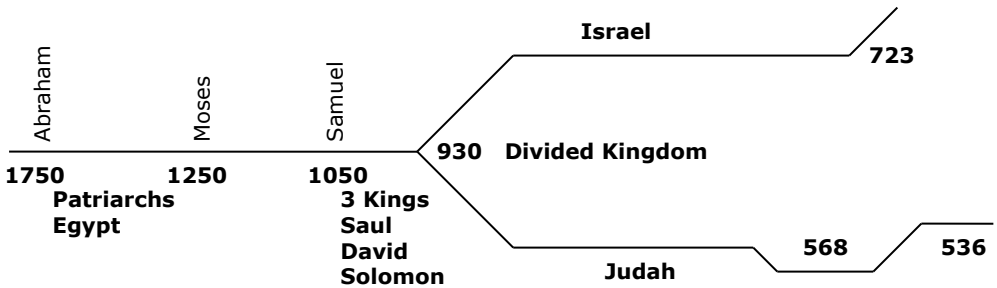
**c 970 B.C.**

**DAVID DIES AT ABOUT AGE 70 (1 Kings 2:10-12; 1 Chronicles 29:26-30)**

**DAVID'S EPITAPH:** "After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'... when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed." (Acts 13:22; 36)

\* (Dates are calculated from the date of Solomon's accession to the throne, usually reckoned as 971/970 B.C. Dates marked \* are estimated from biblical data on the approximate ages of Absalom and Solomon.)

**Historical Setting**



**David 1010-970 as King**

Event	Age
Birth	0 (age)
Anointing	13
Goliath Exile	20
King of Judah	30
King of Israel	37
Bathsheba	50
Absalom's Conspiracy	60
Death	70

*"When you come to the end of your life and you have nothing but death to look forward to and nothing but memories to look back upon, what will you need to see in order for you to come to the conclusion: My life was not in vain? You are not ready to live the rest of your life until you have answered that question." Mike Treneer – Spiritual Leadership 2005*

*"Focus on Giants – You Stumble. Focus on God – Your Giants Tumble."  
 Max Lucado – 'Facing your Giants'*

**STUDY 1 – 1 SAMUEL 13-16 – THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART**

**INTRODUCTION:** Our culture revolves around outward appearances and does not value the kind of things that God values. In this study, we look at how God rejects Saul as King. In Saul's place God chooses David, an unlikely shepherd boy, as King. Still he was a man after God's own Heart.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** Brainstorm what you know about the life of David: e.g., what you like about him, what impresses you about him and in what ways does his life give you hope and encouragement?

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**ISRAEL ASKS FOR A KING (8:1-22):** What were the circumstances out of which Israel asked God for a King? What was their motivation (v5,20)? Why was this such a disappointment to Samuel (v6) and in fact a rejection of God (v7)? What had God predicted many years before (Deut. 17:14-20)?

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**GOD'S REJECTION OF SAUL AS KING (ch.9-15):** What was Saul like (9:1-2) and to what extent was he the kind of King Israel desired (11:6-7)? Why then did God subsequently reject him as King (13:7b-14, 15:10-12, 24-26)? In what ways was Saul not *a man after God's own heart*?

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**SAMUEL'S MOURNING AND FEAR (16:1-3):** Why does Samuel seem so conflicted about God's rejection of Saul (15:11, 16:1)? What made Samuel so fearful for his life with regards to approaching Jesse as God had instructed (v2)? How did God seek to counter this?

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**TRUST AND OBEDIENCE (16:4-6):** Despite mourning for Saul and his fear for his own life, what can we learn from Samuel's subsequent obedience? What might it like for us to trust and obey God in the faith situations that that He is calling us into?

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**HEART MATTERS (16:6-13):** What sorts of 'outward' things do we tend to look at in people? How does our culture reinforce this emphasis on appearance? Why are outward qualities an unreliable way to judge a person? When the Lord looks at our hearts, what qualities do you think He values the most? How should we view ourselves and/or others in light of this?

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On what grounds did Samuel think Eliab would be God's choice (v6)? What was God teaching Samuel in making him look through all of Jesse's sons before revealing He had chosen David? How do you understand why God chose David (examine what is said about David and compare with the statements in 13:14 and Acts 13:22)? Consider also why God chooses any of us (see Additional Quotes 1)?

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**IN SAUL'S SERVICE (16:14-23):** Having been anointed King, how did David conduct himself during his time serving King Saul? How do you respond to the notion of God giving Saul an evil spirit to torment him (v14)? What is the significance of the 'Spirit of the Lord' coming on David (v13) and departing from Saul (v14, 23)? How does the Spirit work / come on people today?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER (1 COR 1:20-31):** What can we learn from these verses about the way in which God acts and the people He chooses? To what extent do you think that God could use you and discuss your reasons for such thoughts?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Praise God that He chooses to use the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. Ask God to make you into a man/woman after His own heart and thank Him that God wants to use such people, people like you in His service.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 SAMUEL 16:7**

## STUDY 2 – 1 SAMUEL 17 – THE LORD’S BATTLE AND VICTORY

**INTRODUCTION:** God demonstrates shows why He chose David as King by defeating Israel's enemies through him and thus upholding His name. This study looks at how David confronts not only Goliath, but our myths of human sufficiency without God.

**SETTING THE SCENE (v1-11):** What human reasons made the Israelites 'dismayed and terrified' of Goliath in these verses? What spiritual reasons should have encouraged them to stand up to him (see also Deuteronomy 20:1-4)? What was the heart of the problem that Israel faced?

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**FOCUSING ON GOD RATHER THAN OUR GIANTS:** Throughout the account what was David's chief concern (esp. v26, 36 & 45)? What is the significance of this word *defiance* and its derivatives (meaning *to resist with boldness*) which are used repeatedly in v10, 23, 25, 26, 36, 42 & 45?

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How do you respond to the Max Lucado quote (Additional Quotes 2)? Which ratio of *God to Giant* thoughts would you most identify with and why? What practical steps can we take to focus more on God and our relationship with Him rather than on our 'giants'?

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**AN UNLIKELY HERO (v12-44):** What makes David an unlikely hero for Israel (v12-19, v33, v38-40)? How is he despised and rejected by Eliab (v28-29), Saul (v32-37) and Goliath (v42-44)? In what sense do they look at the 'outward appearance' (see 16:7) and how does David respond?

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What level of risk was Saul taking in allowing David to fight Goliath and why do you think he does so (v8-9, 32-39)? Why do you think that David is so confident of Goliath's certain defeat (v34-37); was it faith or youthful bravado?

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**WE CAN DO ANYTHING (v45-47):** Society teaches us “if you set your mind to it, you can do anything”; evaluate this message and discuss how this chapter teaches otherwise (see esp. v45-47)? How have you been encouraged by past victories and how they encourage you in the future?

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**SWEET VICTORY (v48-58):** What strikes you about the way that David wins victory for Israel (v48-51)? How did the Israelites respond to David’s victory (v52-54)? Why is Saul so interested in whose son David was given that he had already entered his service (16:14-23)?

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**LEARNING FROM DAVID:** What can we learn here from David’s example? Clearly David did not always get it right (see later studies) but what do you think was his secret of success here?

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**A SPIRITUAL BATTLE:** Paul says we are in a spiritual battle (Eph 6:12); what “Goliaths” are we facing individually or corporately? What can we learn from David about how these giants can be overcome?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What parallels do you see between David’s victory and the ultimate victory Jesus has won for us? In what ways was Jesus the *greater* David?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Spend some time thanking God for Jesus’ victory at the cross on our behalf. Ask God to give you the deep sense of trusting God that we see in the life of David, and to help you look to God, rather than to outward appearances.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 SAMUEL 17:47**

**STUDY 3 – 1 SAMUEL 20 – TRUE FRIENDSHIP**

**INTRODUCTION:** After killing Goliath, David becomes Jonathan's friend (and was in favour with Saul) but then in chapter 19 Saul tries to kill him. In this study we explore the relationship between David and Jonathan and consider the qualities of true friendship and its necessity in our lives.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** What is or isn't true friendship; what does or doesn't it look like? What are your experiences of such friendship (receiving it and giving it, both positive and negative)? Have you ever been surprised by what a friend has (or hasn't) said or done?

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**JONATHAN & DAVID – SEEKING OUT THE HELP OF A TRUE FRIEND (v1-23):** Why do you think that David approaches Jonathan at Ramah and what risk was involved in doing so? What does Jonathan's response in v4 tells us about the significance and depth of their relationship?

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In what ways does Jonathan's relationship with God impact on his relationship with David (see v12-23)? How do you understand Jonathan's comment in v17 that he loved David 'as he loved himself'? What do we learn here from their interaction about the nature of true friendship?

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**JONATHAN & SAUL – THE COST OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP (v24-34):** What risks/sacrifices does Jonathan make for his friendship with David (see also 1 Sam 18:1-4, 23:15-17)? How did Jonathan's choices impact on his relationship with his Father, and his future prospects (v31)?

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Why do you make of the fact that Jonathan seems more concerned about David rather than himself (contrast his grief in v33 with his anger in v34)? What might it look like for us to be motivated by the interests of others rather than our own (see also Philippians 2:1-4)?

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**DAVID & JONATHAN – STRENGTHENED BY FRIENDSHIP (v35-42):** What surprises you about these final exchanges between David and Jonathan? How could (or should) we learn from their tears and kisses; to what extent is this still culturally relevant?

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What might it mean to help someone “find strength in God” (see also 1 Sam 23:15-17)? How do you think our relationship with God should transform our relationships with others?

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**DEPTH OF FRIENDSHIP:** What strikes you about the depth of Jonathan and David's friendship (see also 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 2 Samuel 1:25-27)? In what ways does this jar with our culture? What is it going to take to cultivate this kind of friendship in our own lives?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How would you compare your own friendships to some of the principles we have seen from the lives of David and Jonathan? What steps could you take to be a better friend to others in the coming weeks and months (see also Additional Quotes 3)?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Give thanks for those friendships that God has blessed you with at this time. Ask God to help you to demonstrate more of the qualities of David and Jonathan's friendship in your relationships with others.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 SAMUEL 23:16**

**STUDY 4 – 1 SAMUEL 25 – FINDING SECURITY IN THE LORD**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this study watch how David responds when he is insulted by Nabal. His response and Abigail's timely intervention provide much food for thought when people mistreat us. The events of this chapter are recorded between two accounts where David had a chance to kill King Saul.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** In your experience, what does it take to really put your nose out of joint? What emotions does such an experience bring to bear, and where is the line we should not cross. Can you think of examples when you have either responded strongly or managed to reign yourself in?

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**NABAL'S INSULT (v1-11):** What do we learn about Nabal (v2-3, v17)? What do you think motivates him to pretend he had not heard of David (saying "Who is this David?") and scoff at his request, v10-11, v14-17) when he knew David had been watching over his property (e.g. v15-16 & v21)?

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**DAVID OFFENCE AND RESPONSE (v12-13):** Why is David so offended by Nabal's response (v4, v13, v21-22)? Even if his offence is justified what do you think of his plan to get even (v13, v34)? What lie did David tell himself as he prepared to take vengeance (v21-22)? At this point what would you conclude that David is putting his security in?

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**ABIGAIL'S INTERVENTION (v14-25):** What impresses you about the initiative Abigail takes when she finds out what has happened from the servants? What kind of influence does she have on David and what are the consequences of her shrewd and timely intervention (See also Additional Quotes 4)?

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What do you think motivated Abigail to do what she did? Can you think of examples from your own life where humility, kindness and/or gentleness averted evil, disagreement and/or division?



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**GOD CENTRED INFLUENCE (v26-35):** Who kept David from taking vengeance (v26) and why is this significant? Why was it so important that David not shed blood so needlessly? What impresses you about all that Abigail has to say about the LORD in her conversation with David? How does Abigail help David to put his security in God and not in circumstances or military success?

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How do these events help David focus not merely on Abigail's beauty but on the beauty of another? In what ways might what Abigail did parallel/prefigure what Jesus did for us at the cross?

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**THE VENGEANCE OF THE LORD (v36-44):** How do you respond to the stories conclusion: i.e. heart failure, drunkenness & marriage? What do you think David learned from these events in preparation for being King? How would Nabal's fate further encourage David to trust God about Saul?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What relevant principles do you see in Romans 12:19-21 and Proverbs 15:1 and how are they applied (or not applied) in this chapter? How have you experienced these principles at work in your own life? What might God be saying to you through this passage?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Pray that God would help you find security in Him alone and give you grace to show love towards those who hurt you; entrusting the matter into His hands. Ask God to help you do all you can to live at peace with everyone and to encourage others to do the same.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 SAMUEL 25:29**

**STUDY 5 – 1 SAMUEL 30 – FINDING STRENGTH AT ROCK BOTTOM**

**INTRODUCTION:** David and his men had been off on a military mission with King Achish of Gath. They had left their families unprotected and on their return they find the Amalekites had raided Ziklag and taken their families captive. This chapter is about how David found strength in God amidst crisis.

**SETTING THE SCENE (1 SAM 27 & 29):** Why was David now residing in the land of the Philistines (27:1) and what were the consequences of that decision (27:10-12, 29:3-7)? What does this decision tell us about where David and his sense of security was at?

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**AT ROCK BOTTOM (v1-6a):** How do you think that David and his men felt when they returned home to find their houses burned and families captured? In what ways does (or doesn't) their response to this distress surprise you? When have you felt overwhelmed by distress and how did you respond?

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**STRENGTH IN GOD (v6b):** During David's time in Ziklag, there is no mention of him seeking the Lord: why then, is it so significant that he *found strength in the Lord his God*? What do you think this looks like in practice (see also 1 Sam 23:16)? What is your experience of finding new perspective and clarity of vision from the Lord (e.g. Lamentations 3:19-24, Psalm 73:16-17)?

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**TRUSTING GOD (PSALM 31, esp. v1-13):** We cannot be sure whether this Psalm arose out of this particular occasion, but I think it likely that the truths within it were close to David's heart at a time like this. What parallels are there, both in terms of the things he is facing and how He reflects on God?

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**MOVED TO ACTION (v7-10):** What impresses you about David's leadership seen through the contrast in the men as they turn from near mutiny (v6) to hot pursuit of their enemies? Is there anything we can learn here from the way that David *enquires of the Lord* here (v8)?

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**ENJOYING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (v11-20):** Why do you think David's men agree to his ambitious plan to pursue the Amalekites despite the odds being increasingly stacked against them? How did God open the door to victory through the unlikely figure of the famished and dehydrated Egyptian to whom David's men showed kindness? What is surprising about the 'completeness' of the outcome?

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**EQUAL SPOILS FOR ALL (v21-30):** To what extent would you say (or not say) that the soldiers who did not go up to fight with David do wrong in staying behind (see Additional Quote 5)? How do you respond to David's decision to share the plunder with the 200 men who had stayed behind (v10 & 24)?

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What was wrong with the logic of those who said that they should get nothing (v22-24)? What might be a present day situation in which you could honour those who are tired and weary?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How does this incident, and the lasting edict that arises from it, demonstrate God's grace to us? In what ways might David's actions anticipate Jesus' famous words about coming to Him for rest in Matthew 11:28-30?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Pray to God asking Him to strengthen you amidst the challenges, difficulties and pressures that you currently face. Ask God to help you respond like David in response graciously to others amidst the undeserved blessings that God lavishes upon each of us every day.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 SAMUEL 30:6**

**STUDY 6 – 1 SAMUEL 31:1 – 2 SAMUEL 2:7 – CHANGING OF THE GUARD**

**INTRODUCTION:** These chapters record for us the death of Saul (& sons) and David's accession to the throne. Saul last appeared in ch.28 when he consulted Samuel through the Medium at Endor. Saul was told that the next day God would deliver both him, and Israel, into the hands of the Philistines.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** What examples can you think of where there has been some kind of regime change (royal, political, managerial etc)? What was both positive and negative about the way this came about? As such things become anticipated what are the temptations on both sides?

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**THE DEATH OF SAUL (1 SAMUEL 28:20-25, 31:1-6):** What strikes you about Saul from the scenes we find at the end of ch.28 and now here in ch.31? What is most tragic about what is and isn't said in these passages? Why were these things significant in the outworking of God's purposes?

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**THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE (31:7-12):** What makes this defeat such a big deal for both Israel and the Philistines? The valiant men of Jabesh Gilead are unlikely heroes in this story: what most impresses and/or intrigues you about their actions?

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**UNDER THE TAMARISK TREE (31:13):** There are only 3 references to Tamarisk trees in the Bible and two of them relate to Saul: why might it be significant that Saul gets buried here given what happened in 1 Sam 22:6-23 (see esp. v6)? In what ways would you sum up his reign as King?

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**NEWS REACHES DAVID (2 SAMUEL 1:1-16):** Two days after returning to Ziklag, a man arrived from Saul's camp: what similarities and differences are there between his story and what we read in ch.31? Why do you think he responds to David's questions (v3,4,5,8,13 & 14) in the way he does?

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What do you make of David's strong responses (esp. v11-12 & v15-16) to what the man has told him? Why was it such a big deal to raise a hand against the Lord's anointed?

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**HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN (2 SAM 1:17-27):** David takes time to lament rather than rush to claim the throne: what do you find inspiring about what David has to say about the fallen King Saul and his sons? What place do you think should be the place of lament in the life of the church?

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**DAVID BECOMES KING (2:1-7, 5:1-5):** What do you imagine it looked like for David to enquire of the Lord and why is this such a significant part of how David operates? Whose initiative is for David's accession to the throne and why does this matter (2:4a, 5:1-3)? How does David's treatment of the men of Jabesh Gilead show that he was the King Israel truly needed (2:4b-7)?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** David was only a teenager when God called him, and he becomes King aged 30: what most impresses you about the way that David has waited and persevered throughout this period? In what ways do you think all his experiences have prepared him for this moment?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God that His purposes always prevail. Ask Him to help us also to trust Him and be patient as we await the outworking of those purposes in our own lives. Thank Him also for the way His purposes have worked through the life and death of His ultimate anointed one, Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSES: 2 SAMUEL 1:25-26**

**STUDY 7 – 2 SAMUEL 6 - 'GOD'S WRATH AND BLESSING'**

**INTRODUCTION:** In the Bible we often see a contrast between God's love/goodness and His holiness/wrath. This chapter's focus is the Ark of the Covenant. It was a wooden chest covered with gold, and it had an ornate gold lid (mercy seat). It represented the presence and glory of God in Israel.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** How do you respond to the conversation between Susan, Lucy and Mrs Beaver depicting God as *not safe*, but still *good* (Additional Quotes 6). Thinking of examples through Scripture, how do you understand the tension between God's love/goodness and His holiness/wrath?

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**HISTORY OF THE ARK (1 SAM 5-6):** After the Ark of God was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam 4:2-11), what impact does it have in Ashdod & Gath (ch.5)? What lessons about the Ark of God shine through from this chapter and the Arks subsequent return to Israel in ch.6?

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**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARK (v1-5):** What was so special about the ark? Why did David want to bring it up to Jerusalem (conquered and made capital city in 2 Sam 5:6-16)? Why do you think that both David, and the people of Israel, saw this event as such a cause for celebration (v5)?

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**GOD'S WRATH (v6-7):** What was wrong with how and who transported the Ark via this 'new cart' (1 Chronicles 15:11-15 & Exodus 25:12-15)? How do you react to the LORD's anger against Uzzah? To what extent does God's wrath fit with your own understanding of His character?

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**DAVID'S REACTION (v8-10):** How do you respond to David's reaction after Uzzah's death? Do you generally sway towards being 'irreverent' or being 'afraid' of God, and how does this affect your relationship with Him? How should we respond rightly to God's holiness?

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**BLESSING FOR OBED-EDOM (v10-12):** What does the fact that God blessed the house of Obed-Edem while the ark resided in his household teach us about God? What factors suggest that this was actually the right thing for David to do (see families/roles in 1 Chronicles 26:1-4, Numbers 4:15)?

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**TRANSPORTING THE ARK TAKE II (v13-15):** What do the Israelites do differently when they try again to transport the Ark to Jerusalem (v12-15)? What can we learn from David's example about how we can experience God's presence and blessing (see Additional Quotes 7)?

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**MICHAL'S COMPLAINT (v16-23):** To what extent can you identify with Michal's feelings (despising David in her heart) and her words (distinguished and disrobed)? How would you evaluate her reaction (see also 1 Chronicles 15:27)? What was David's priority, and what was Michal's?

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**CELEBRATING BEFORE GOD:** This is the only record of David dancing; why do you think he dances so energetically here? What does it mean to do things 'before the Lord' (v5, 14, 17, 21)? What would help you worship without holding back? How can your worship be a more joyous celebration?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER (PSALM 132):** What light does this Psalm (thought to be associated with the events of this chapter) shed upon David's enduring motivation to bring the Ark to Jerusalem?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Ask God to give you a fresh vision of His holiness and goodness. Praise Him for all that Jesus accomplished for us at the cross; the price that His holiness demanded so that we might enjoy acceptance, forgiveness and eternal life.

**MEMORY VERSES: PSALM 132:13-14**

## STUDY 8 – 2 SAMUEL 7 – AN AMAZING PROMISE

**INTRODUCTION:** God's chosen king is now on the throne of all Israel, and they had enjoyed victory over all their enemies. Now David has an idea to build a house for God whose presence dwelt in the tabernacle. God, however, had different ideas, but those ideas involved building a house for David!

**SETTING THE SCENE:** This is a very significant chapter that showcases some of God's most incredible promises to His people. What's your understanding of the word *promise* and what does it take to either keep or break it? What are the key promises you feel that God has given to you?

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**A HOUSE FOR THE LORD (v1-7):** What prompts David's desire to build a house for God? Nathan initially tells David to go for it (v3), but what did both he, and David, fail to take into account (v4-7)? Previously David enquired of the Lord (1 Sam 30:7-8, 2 Sam 5:22-23), why does he not do that here?

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Bearing in mind Isaiah 55:8-9, what do we need to keep in mind when we are keen to do something for God? What does God's response to David's plan teach us about His character? What unwanted monuments might we or others have sought to build for the Lord?

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**THE DAVIDIC COVENANT (v8-11a):** What strikes you about how had transformed David's fortunes (v8-9a)? What specific promises does God now make to David (9b-11)? How are these promises fulfilled (nb: David's name appears in 28/66 books of the Bible and is mentioned nearly 1,000 times)?

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**A HOUSE FOR DAVID (v12-17):** What is meant here by making (not building) a *house* for David? Who will build it and why was it to be this way (see 1 Chron 22:6-10)? How and why would this son be punished (v14) and what assurances is David given regarding the longevity of His Kingdom (v15-16)?

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**DAVID'S RESPONSE (v18-24):** After hearing God's promises, what does David pray for, and praise God for? Why is he so astonished not only by God's promises but also with God himself? When have you been astonished to discover both God and His plans for you are far greater than you imagined?

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**DAVID'S REQUEST (v25-29):** After praising God for his greatness, what does David now ask? If God is Sovereign, what can we learn from how David prays into the promises of God? What insights does this give us into the relationship between God's sovereignty and our responsibility?

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**FULFILMENT IN CHRIST:** In what ways is Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:17-19) only a shadow of the one which would one day be built (John 2:19-21)? How and why would Jesus be punished (see 2 Cor 5:21 & Galatians 3:13) and yet shown everlasting love (see John 10:17)? How will the promises of v10-11a one day be fulfilled (see Revelation 21:1-4 & 22-27)?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How has God demonstrated His goodness or faithfulness in keeping his Promises recently? What can we learn and put into practice from the way that David prays to God (note esp. his reference to himself as the LORD's 'servant' and to God as 'Sovereign LORD')?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Ask God to help you have confidence as you wait for the promises He has made to you, and to live in the light of the certainty of His promised return. Thank God for the fulfilment of His promises to David in Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE: 2 SAMUEL 7:28**

**STUDY 9 – 2 SAMUEL 11-12 – FACING TEMPTATION**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this study we see the contrast between the dire consequences of sin, and the incredible and wonderful grace of God. The passage shows us that God uses weak sinful humans to further His amazing plans and promises.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** To what extent do you agree that “the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart”? What examples can you think of in our world, or indeed from your own life, where a particular sin has led to a domino-effect of subsequent sins in the effort to cover it up?

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**DAVID’S SIN (11:1-5):** What were the steps that led to David’s sin here (Additional Quotes 8&9)? At each stage, how could David have prevented himself from sinning (see also 2 Sam 23:34)? What can we learn about resisting temptation? Is temptation sinful; if not, at what point does it become sin?

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**THE CONSEQUENCES (11:6-27):** Why does David try and go to such lengths to cover up his sin? What impact do his decisions in this chapter have on others (e.g., Joab, Uriah, Bathsheba)? Why are we often tempted to try and cover up our sins rather than confess them to God?

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To what extent do you think David thought at this point that he had got away with it? What light does Psalm 32 cast regarding how David felt during this period? What is the significance of the fact that the only specific mention of the LORD in this chapter comes in verses 27?

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**CONFRONTING SIN (12:1-10):** Why doesn’t Nathan raise the issue with David directly, choosing to tell a story rather than confronting him directly? Why is it so hard to be objective about our own sin?

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What does God mean when He says that David had *'despised'* Him and His Word (v9-10)? How do we show contempt for God and His Word when we sin? To what extent do you personally feel you take sin as seriously as this strong language implies?

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**GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY (12:11-14):** How do you respond to David's admission of guilt in v13 (compare with Saul in 1 Samuel 13:11-15, 15:19-26)? How do we see God's justice and mercy in how He deals with David's sin (v10-14)?

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**GOD'S FORGIVENESS (12:15-22):** On what basis can God forgive David's sin (see Leviticus 20:10, 24:17 & Romans 3:23-26 for context)? What do the loss of David's illegitimate child, and the birth of Solomon, teach us about how God deals with sin (see also Hebrews 12:5-13)?

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**GOD'S GRACE (12:23-31):** How is God's grace evident in David's life following this event? Compare 11:1 with 12:28-29; how significant is it that David now goes to battle rather than remaining at home?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What have you learned from this study about human hearts, sin's consequences and God's judgement & forgiveness? In what ways do David's failures encourage you that God can still use messed-up people like us to fulfil His purposes?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Pray that God would guard and protect your hearts from the seemingly 'minor' temptations we face each day. Pray that He will enable you to stop the snowballing effect of temptation and sin. Reflect back over the past week and ask God for His grace, mercy and forgiveness.

**MEMORY VERSES: PSALM 51:1-2**

**STUDY 10 – 2 SAMUEL 13-14 – REAPING WHAT YOU SOW**

**INTRODUCTION:** Following the tragic events of chapters 11-12, things now begin to fall apart within David's family. The central figures here are Amnon, Absalom and their sister Tamar. These chapters are filled with lust, rape, murder and deceit. The sins of the Father had passed the next generation.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** To what extent do you agree that it's sometimes the people who are particularly dear to us who hurt us the most? If you do agree, why do you think this is?

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**FAMILY DYNAMICS (1 CHRON 3:1-8):** What have we learned so far in the story about David's family dynamics? What strikes you from this record in Chronicles about how David's family was structured? What do we learn about Amnon, Absalom & Tamar and they were related (see also 2 Sam 13:1,4)?

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**LOVESICK AMNON (13:1-5):** While there was precedent for marrying your half-sister (see Gen. 20:12 or Ex. 6:20), this was later forbidden in the law (Leviticus 20:17,19). What further red flags do these verses throw up regarding Amnon's love for his half-sister Tamar?

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In what sense was Jonadab (Amnon's cousin) the kind of friend you really don't need? What was so destructive about the advice he gave and what in contrast should he have been telling Amnon?

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**AMNON GETS HIS WAY (13:6-14):** What makes Amnon's request (v6) so childish, and why does David indulge him by agreeing to it? How does his refusal to eat (v9) show he had simply used David to get his way? What surprises you about Tamar's protests? Why does he refuse to listen?

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**THE CONSEQUENCES (13:15-21):** In what ways does Amnon's response of hatred show that his feelings were more lust than love? Why was sending her away a greater wrong than rape (v16, Deut. 22:28-29)? What is good and not so good about Absalom (v20) and David's responses to this?

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**ABSALOM'S REVENGE (v23-39):** Two years later and Absalom now hosts a feast: what cunning does he demonstrate in how he now lures Amnon and conspires to kill him? What is Jonadab's motivation in correcting the false report that all the Kings sons were dead (v30-33)? Why does Absalom then flee and what was good / not so good about David's response to all of this?

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**JOAB'S RUSE (14:1-22):** We are told that Joab knew that David longed for Absalom and his actions hark back to the method employed by Nathan to confront him in ch.12: what impresses you about the way the woman from Tekoa helps David see his hypocrisy? What do you think held David back from extending to Absalom the grace that God had shown to him?

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**ABSALOM RESTORED (14:2-33):** Why bring Absalom back, but not allow him to see his face? What methods did Absalom use to coax Joab into speaking to the King to allow Him to finally see his face? Where do you think this now leaves their relationship?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What do you think was going on in David's heart throughout this sorry set of events that kept him from dealing with his sons. Why do you think he kept Absalom at such a distance for so long? In what ways do we also reap what we sow in our own lives?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God for the fact that He works in sinful and messed up people like these people in the story and like us. Ask God to help us to sow to the spirit rather than to the flesh. Ask Him to help us pass on to the next generation only that which is helpful and honouring to God.

**MEMORY VERSES: GALATIANS 6:7-8**

**STUDY 11 – 2 SAMUEL 15-16 – ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY**

**INTRODUCTION:** Absalom is described in as the most handsome man in the kingdom (14:25). We saw in ch.13-14 how he avenged his sister's rape by murdering his brother Amnon. After that Absalom fled and it was not until 3 years later when he was restored to his father's favour. But during these challenging years all is not well and we now read of his conspiracy against David.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** To what extent do you agree that it's often the people who are particularly dear to us who hurt us the most? If you do agree, why do you think this is? In what ways might the events of chapters 13-14 have contributed to a degree of discontent within Absalom?

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**INITIATING THE CONSPIRACY (15:1-12):** What steps does Absalom take to set in motion his conspiracy plan (v1-6)? What do you think made the conspiracy so appealing (v12)? What could Absalom and/or David have done differently to avoid this situation arising?

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**FLEEING FROM TROUBLE (15:13-30):** Do you think that David was right to flee from Jerusalem? How do you think he would have felt as he did so? What do these verses suggest would have been the hardest aspects of this whole sorry episode?

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What impresses you about Ittai the Gittite's response to David in v19-22? Who does his response remind you of (see Ruth 1:16-17)? In what ways can you follow his example by encouraging and standing by your own leaders as they face opposition?

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**A FRIEND'S BETRAYAL (15:31-37):** *The "advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who enquires of God" (16:23).* How devastating would the news of Ahithophel's betrayal have been for David (v31, 2 Sam 23:34)? What might have caused this trusted advisor to rebel against David? How does David work to frustrate his advice through his servant Hushai the Arkite (see also 16:15-17:29)?

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How does Psalm 55 (esp. v12-14 & v20-21) help us understand how David felt about this betrayal?  
How do things turn out in the end for Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23)?

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**FINDING FAITH IN ADVERSITY (16:5-14):** What impresses you about David's attitude of humility towards this man Shimei who was strongly opposing him? What clues are there about how David, finds this experience of being back on the run helpful in finding perspective and faith in God?

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In Psalm 3 David writes passionately about this period in his life. What does the Psalm reveal about David's perspective on the situation and the strength of his relationship with God? What truths about God comfort him during this time?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** Which characters in the story do you most identify with at this time and why? Which aspects of the story most help you to respond with endurance, encouragement and hope in your own lives (see Romans 15:4)?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God for helping you to trust him through crisis and adversity. Pray for others who are going through periods of struggle just now. Pray for one another that you would respond to adversity with hope, humility and an unshakable trust in God.

**MEMORY VERSE: 2 SAMUEL 15:21**

## STUDY 12 – 2 SAMUEL 18-19 – ABSALOM'S DEATH

**INTRODUCTION:** Ch. 17 was about how Absalom would proceed. David had left Hushai the Arkite to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel. Absalom had gone with Hushai's advice and Ahithophel had responded by committing suicide. Moreover, David had been forewarned about Absalom's plans. Now in ch.18-19 we have a record of the subsequent battle and its aftermath.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** To what extent do you agree that it's often the people who are particularly dear to us who hurt us the most? If you do agree, why do you think this is? In lieu of Absalom's conspiracy to become King, how would you envisage the contrasting emotions David felt at this point?

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**ABSALOM'S DEFEAT (17:24-18:8):** Having avoided the imminent threat David heads to Mahanaim where he receives assistance (17:24-29); why was this so helpful to David and his men as they prepared to face Absalom? What impresses you by how David organises his army (8:1-2a) and his very clear instructions about the treatment of his son Absalom (v5)?

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How do you respond to the difference of opinion about whether David should go out with the men (v2-4a)? What do you think it means that *the woods swallowed up more men than the sword* (v8)?

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**ABSALOM'S DEATH (18:9-17):** Why does the idea of Absalom riding on a mule and getting stuck by his hair in a tree sound so ridiculous (see also 14:25-26)? In what ways was his vanity his true downfall? Absalom is spotted and despite David's instructions, Joab decides to dispense justice rather than mercy. How do you evaluate Joab's actions? Were they in David's best interests or not?

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**DAVID'S DISTRESS (18:19-32):** What do you make of the discussion about who should take back the news to David: Ahimaaz (also in 2 Sam 15:27,36, 17:17,20) or the Cushite? Whose message was most true to what happened? What is surprising about David's questions in v29 & 32?



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**DAVID'S DISTRESS (18:33-9:4):** These verses strongly describe David's grief for his son: to what extent do you think that his overwhelming grief was appropriate or excessive? What impact does this grief have on the men who return from victory having to steal themselves into the city?

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**JOAB'S STRONG REBUKE (9:5-8):** In his grief David had lost perspective, and Joab warns him of the consequences if he did not pull it together: why was such an intervention so necessary and what impact did it have on David? Specifically, what did David sitting in the gate communicate to the men?

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**THE RETURN OF THE KING (19:9-43):** What are the dynamics of the argument about bringing David back to Jerusalem (v9-10)? How does David negotiate his return and ensure that all Israel was of one mind (v11-13) before he returned (v14-18a)? What most stands out to you from how David treats his subjects as he encounters them enroute to Jerusalem (v18b-39)?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER (18:18):** What do you find most sad about this verse (compare also with 14:27)? What would you like to be your legacy at the end of your life? What steps do you need to begin taking the present, in order to make this a reality in the future?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God that even in the worst crisis God is still on His throne and still has a plan for our lives. In your own grief (past, present or future) ask God to help you to trust in Him and keep in perspective all that God is doing in and through your life.

**MEMORY VERSE: 2 SAMUEL 18:18**

**STUDY 13 – 2 SAMUEL 22 – AN AWESOME GOD**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this chapter (also Psalm 18), David reflects back on how God had watched over him, and how such knowledge helps him to live in the present and glorify God. The challenge for us is to ask ourselves to what extent we know this 'awesome God' who as we have seen David truly knew.

**SETTING THE SCENE (v1):** There is some debate about when this was written: the title might suggest around the events of 2 Samuel 7, but regardless, the compiler of 2 Samuel included it at the end of David's life. Read the chapter and discuss where it might fit and what implications that might have?

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**PRAISE TO HIS GOD (v2-4):** What is the significant of the different descriptions David uses for God in these verses? How does each description help us understand God better? In what ways throughout David's life did God prove Himself to be worthy of these descriptions?

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**GOD'S DELIVERANCE (v5-16):** What was David's first port of call in his time of distress? What are some of the ways that David mentions about how God has delivered him?

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What holds us back from praying, as David did (v7) when we are in difficulty? What has been your experience of God's deliverance in your own life?

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**INTO THE SPACIOUS PLACE (v17-20):** What might these deep waters have been that God pulled him out of? What do you understand David to mean by this idea of a spacious place (v20)? To what extent do you sense God's delight in you?

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**DAVID'S HEART AND DESIRES (v21-30):** What do these verses tell us about David's desires and heart for God? What is the secret of David ability to win victory over his enemies? How are David's victories over his enemies described, and what impression does this give of them?

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**GOD'S WAY IS PERFECT (v31-46):** What further observations does David make about why God's way really is the best way? How do the various descriptions (e.g., feet like the deer, standing on the heights, broad path) help paint a vivid picture of the blessings David has enjoyed from the Lord?

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**PRAISING GOD'S DELIVERANCE (v47-51):** What impresses you about David's heartfelt praise of God His Rock and Saviour? What do you think it takes to develop such an attitude of praise and thankfulness in your own life?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** In what ways is Jesus the ultimate fulfilment of these verses? Consider *His victory* (compare v32-43 with Heb 2:14-15 & Col 2:13-15), *His rule over the nations* (compare v44-46 with Matt 25:31-46 & Rev 19:11-16) and *His final exaltation* (compare v47-52 with Philippians 2:9-11)

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Praise God for all that He has done in the past, for how He has made you righteous, how He helps you day by day and for what He is going to do in the future. Ask God to help you to put into practice particular lessons that you have learned from the Life of David.

**MEMORY VERSES: PROVERBS 3:5-6**

STUDY 14 – 2 SAMUEL 23:1 – 1 KINGS 2:10 – PASSING THE BATON

**INTRODUCTION:** These chapters record the final days of David's reign as King. In this study we will use the detail of these events to access whether David finished well and what kind of legacy he left behind. The snapshots in this final study include his final words, his choice to count the fighting men and his response to Adonijah's coup to seize the throne.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** As we consider David's final days, what are your overall impressions of this life taken as a whole? What did he do well and what did he not do so well? What would be your initial impressions of the question of whether he finished well?

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**DAVID'S FINAL WORDS (2 SAMUEL 23:1-7):** What do these so-called *last words* teach us about his heart and longing at the end of his life? What has David learned from God about the kind of leadership He seeks? What does David imply was the basis of the covenant the Lord had made with Him?

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**DAVID'S MIGHTY WORDS (2 SAMUEL 23:8-39):** Bearing in mind Palm 78:70-72; what is your response to the seemingly never-ending list of incredible people that join David? Why do you think they are so eager to follow David? Which of their exploits mentioned in these verses particularly strike you?

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**COUNTING THE FIGHTING MEN (2 SAMUEL 24):** Compare v1 with 1 Chronicles 21:1: how would you summarise the events that led David to count the fighting men? What was the big deal about taking such a census (see Exodus 30:12)? What is implied by Joab's question in v3a?

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David is later conscience stricken (v10), what do you think of how he responds to his guilt, and esp. to the three options the Lord presents to him through Gad the prophet? What impresses you about David's insistence to pay for Arunah's threshing floor (v18-25 and see also 2 Chron 3:1)?

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**ADONIJAH'S COUP (1 KINGS 1:1-40):** How is David presented and what do you think motivates the recruitment of Abishag (v1-4)? Within this context, to what extent can you sympathise with Adonijah's claim to the throne in v5-10 (see 2 Chron 3:2-5)? What surprises you about who is and isn't with him?

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Nathan moves quickly to enlist Bathsheba's to talk with David: what do we learn here about David's promises about who should succeed him (v11-14, see also 1 Chron 22:5-9)? What impresses you about how the matter is then raised (v15-27), and David's decision to make Solomon King (v29-40)?

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**DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON (1 KINGS 2:1-12):** Solomon is anointed King twice (1 Kings 1:39 & 1 Chron 29:22): in what ways was David's ongoing influence important for the new young ruler? What mandate does David give to his son (v2-4) and what matters does he leave him to deal with (v5-12)?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER (ACTS 13:22,36, HEB 11:32-34):** What do these verses tell us about how the New Testament writers remembered David's reign? How do these statements stack up with what we have seen in the life of David? In what ways are these verses a challenge to us?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God for the life of David and all it has to teach us about what it means to serve God's purposes in our generation. Ask God to help you to live and serve God faithfully as David did and invest deeply in passing it on to the next generation.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 KINGS 2:2-3a**

## ADDITIONAL QUOTES

**QUOTE 1 (Study 1):** “David was... “just” a layperson. His father omitted to present him to Samuel; indeed, it probably didn’t even occur to him. To his brothers he was a nonentity. Worse, as we learn from examining his genealogy, he had bad blood in his family tree, hated and despised Moabite blood. The choice of David, the run and the shepherd, to be the anointed, to be a sign and representative of God’s working presence in human life and history, is surely intended to convey a sense of inclusion to all ordinary men and women, the plain folk, the undistinguished in the eyes of their neighbours, those lacking social status and peer recognition. Which is to say, the overwhelming majority of all who have lived in this old planet earth. Election into God’s purposes isn’t based on proven ability or potential promise.” **Leap over a Wall, Eugene H. Peterson, pg.17-18**

**QUOTE 2 (Study 2):** “Giants. We must face them. Yet we need not face them alone. Focus first, and most, on God. The times David did, giants fell. The days he didn’t David did. Test this theory by listing the observations David made regarding Goliath. I find only two. One statement to Saul about Goliath (v36) and one to Goliath’s face (v26). That’s it. Two Goliath-related comments (and tacky ones at that) and no questions. No inquiries about Goliath’s skill, age, social standing, or IQ. [...] But he gives much thought to God. I count nine references (v26, 36, 45, 46 & 47). God-thoughts outnumber Goliath-thoughts nine to two. How does this ratio compare with yours? Do you ponder God’s grace four times as much as you ponder your guilt? Is your list of blessings four times as long as your list of complaints? Is your mental file of hope 4 times as thick as your mental file of dread? Are you four times more likely to describe the strength of God as you are the demands of your day? No? Then David is your man. Some note the absence of miracles in the story. [...] But there is one. David is one. A rough-edged walking wonder of God who neon-lights this truth: Focus on giants – you stumble. Focus on God – Your giants tumble. Lift your eyes, giant slayer. The God who made a miracle out of David stands ready to make one out of you.” **Max Lucado, Facing Your Giants, pg.9**

**QUOTE 3 (Study 3):** “When I think of that story, my heart is stirred by a desire not only that I might have a Jonathan in my life—that is surely very wonderful, but very selfish—but also that I might find a David somewhere to whom I could be a Jonathan. Would you ask the Holy Spirit to make you a friend like that, to help you to cultivate in your life sanctifying disinterested, steadfast friendships? Oh, that the Lord might let us play a part in shaping and fashioning another life in the image of Jesus Christ!” Alan Redpath, **The Making of a Man of God: Lessons from the Life of David**

**QUOTE 4 (Study 4):** “Four hundred men rein in their rides. Some gape at the food; others gawp at the female. She’s good lookin’ with good cookin’, a combination that stops any army. (Picture a neck-snapping blonde showing up at boot camp with a truck full of burgers and ice cream.) Abigail’s no fool. She knows the importance of the moment. She stands as the final barrier between her family and sure death. Falling at David’s feet, she issues a plea worthy of a paragraph in Scripture. “On me, my Lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. She doesn’t defend Nabal but agrees that he is a scoundrel. She begs not for justice but forgiveness, accepting blame when she deserves none. “Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant (25:28). She offers the gifts from her house and urges David to leave Nabal to God and avoid the dead weight of remorse. Her words fall on David like July sun on ice. He melts.”

**Max Lucado, Facing your giants pg.57-58**

**QUOTE 5 (Study 5):** "David did many mighty deeds in his life. He did many foolish deeds in his life. But perhaps David's noblest deed was to honour his tired soldiers at Brook Besor." Someday someone will read what David did and name their church the congregation at Brook Besor. Isn't that what the church is intended to be? A place for soldiers to recover their strength? Brook Besor blesses rest. Brook Besor also cautions against arrogance. David knew the victory was a gift. Let's remember the same. Salvation comes like the Egyptian in the desert, a delightful surprise on the path. Unearned. Undeserved. Who are the strong to criticise the tired? Are you weary? Catch your breath. We need your strength. Are you strong? Reserve passing judgement on the tired. Odds are you'll need to plop down yourself. And when you do, Brook Besor is a good story to know."

**Max Lucado, Facing your Giants, pg.78**

**QUOTE 6 (Study 6):** "Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver. "If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly." "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy. "Safe!" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

**From C.S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**

**QUOTE 7 (Study 6):** "Why did David dance? David, dancing before the Ark, reckless and joyful. David knew something about God to which Uzzah was blind and deaf. David had been living dangerously all his life – with lions and bears, a taunting giant and a murderous king, marauding Philistines and cunning Amalekites, in wilderness caves and wadis. And with and in God: running and hiding, praying and loving. David was never in a position to take care of God. God was Saviour and Commander, Shepherd and Rock. God wasn't a sheep that David tended. He wasn't a tame God. In and under these conditions David had learned to live openly, daringly, trustingly and exultantly before God."

**Leap over a Wall, Eugene H. Peterson, pg.15**

**QUOTE 8 (Study 9):** "God said there were at least 3 things the King of Israel must not do: he must not multiply horses for himself; he must not multiply wives for himself and must not greatly increase silver and gold for himself. David was faithful in the first and the third; but being a man of passion, he failed in the second. And even though his wives and concubines increased, his passion was not abated. This king who took another man's wife already had a harem full of women. The simple fact is that the passion of sex is not satisfied by a full harem of women; it is increased. Having many women does not reduce a man's libido, it excites it . . . it stimulates it. David, being a man with a strong sexual appetite, mistakenly thought, to satisfy it, I will have more women."

**David, A Man of Passion and Destiny, Charles Swindoll, pg. 181-182**

**QUOTE 9 (Study 9):** "When we read this terrible story we instinctively think of the offense as David's, but this attractive woman cannot be entirely excused. Bathsheba was careless and foolish, lacking in the usual Hebrew modesty, or she certainly would not have washed in a place where she knew she could be overlooked. From her roof-top she would often have looked out to the royal palace and must have known that she could be seen. It is not enough merely to avoid sin ourselves. The New Testament insists that Christians must ensure they do not become a stumbling block to others (Romans 14:12-13). If David had gone to war, he would not have seen Bathsheba that night. If she had thought seriously about her action, she would not have put temptation in his path."

**Raymond Brown, Skilful Hands: Studies in the Life of David, 1972, pg. 99**

# MEMORY VERSES

## STUDY 1: 1 SAMUEL 16 – THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.' **1 Samuel 16:7**

## STUDY 2: 1 SAMUEL 17 – THE LORDS BATTLE AND VICTORY

<sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands.' **1 Samuel 17:47**

## STUDY 3: 1 SAMUEL 20 – TRUE FRIENDSHIP

<sup>16</sup> And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him to find strength in God. **1 Samuel 23:16**

## STUDY 4: 1 SAMUEL 25 – FINDING SECURITY IN THE LORD

<sup>29</sup> Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. **1 Samuel 25:29**

## STUDY 5: 1 SAMUEL 30 – FINDING STRENGTH AT ROCK BOTTOM

<sup>6</sup> David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. **1 Sam 30:6**

## STUDY 6: 1 SAMUEL 31:1-2 SAMUEL 2:7 – CHANGING OF THE GUARD

<sup>26</sup> I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. **2 Samuel 1:26**

## STUDY 7: 2 SAMUEL 6 – GOD'S WRATH AND BLESSING

<sup>13</sup> For the LORD has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling, saying, <sup>14</sup> "This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it." **Psalms 132:13-14**

## STUDY 8: 2 SAMUEL 7 – AN AMAZING PROMISE

<sup>28</sup> Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. **2 Samuel 7:28**

## STUDY 9: 2 SAMUEL 11-12 – FACING TEMPTATION

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. **Psalms 51:1-2**

## STUDY 10: 2 SAMUEL 13-14 – REAPING WHAT YOU SOW

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

## STUDY 11: 2 SAMUEL 15-16 – ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY

<sup>21</sup> But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be."

## STUDY 12: 2 SAMUEL 18-19 – ABSALOM'S DEATH

<sup>18</sup> During his life-time Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, 'I have no son to carry on the memory of my name.' He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day. **2 Samuel 18:18**

## STUDY 13: 2 SAMUEL 22 – AN AWESOME GOD

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

## STUDY 14: 2 SAMUEL 23:1- 1 KINGS 2:10 – PASSING THE BATON

<sup>2</sup> "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, act like a man, <sup>3</sup> and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. **1 Kings 2:2-3a**