

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY ONE

God's Heart, God's Man, God's Ways

Selected Scriptures

Isn't it beautiful how God chooses nobodies to turn into somebody? That's the story of the life of David.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EVERYONE needs a role model—someone whose life lays out a road map to follow. A good role model warns of pitfalls and, more importantly, guides others toward a life completely devoted to God. David was such a model.

In his book, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll describes this remarkable man.

Poet, musician, courageous warrior, and national statesman, David distinguished himself as one of God's greatest men. In battle, he modeled invincible confidence. In decisions, he judged with wisdom and equity. In loneliness, he wrote with transparent vulnerability and quiet trust. In friendship, he was loyal to the end. Whether a humble shepherd boy or an obscure musician before the King Saul, he remained faithful and trustworthy. . . . What a man of God!¹

Yet David was human to the core—mighty in battle but weak at home, unbeatable when fighting his mightiest foes but defenseless against his own anger and lust.

The triumphs that marked David's youth gradually faded in the distance as he found himself lost deep in the forest of his own sin. In his moments of brokenness, however, David showed what one can do after drifting astray. Tears of deep grief and humble confession drip from the pages of his penitent psalms, revealing a true role model's heart of devotion in the darkest times.



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God's Heart, God's Man, God's Ways

Selected Scriptures

The example of David's life acts as a spiritual compass that points to God—both in moments of great faith and in seasons of even greater failure. David showed how anyone—imperfections and all—can be a person after God's own heart.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

In his psalms, David poured out his heart to God—all his fears, joys, victories, and losses. Thankfully, God preserved these psalms as a guide for His people's prayers. Offer [Psalm 139:1, 5–6](#) as your prayer before you search the Scriptures today:

*O LORD, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me. . . .
You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too great for me to understand!*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel share how Israel graduated from an insignificant family of nomads to a firmly established kingdom. The narrative begins by focusing on Israel's first king, Saul. While Saul's great physical stature made him equal to the kings of other nations, God's people needed a king of great *spiritual* stature who loved and served God.

Because Saul did not fear or obey God, God removed Saul from the throne. The narrative reaches a climax in 1 Samuel 16 when the modest shepherd David was anointed king. The rest of 1 and 2 Samuel tells of the mountains and valleys of David's life. Take some time to review Pastor Chuck's charts below to see the big picture of this biblical account.



God's Heart, God's Man, God's Ways

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FIRST SAMUEL

BEGINNING	Samuel The Last Judge				Saul The First King		ENDING
	BIRTH	GROWTH AND CALL	MINISTRY	CHANGE	REJECTION BY GOD	REBELLION AGAINST GOD	
Samuel's godliness					Impatient Rash Disobedient "Insane" Jealous Murderous		Saul's apostasy
National hope							Depression
Motivation							Personal despair
Purity							Suicide
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTERS 2-3	CHAPTERS 4-7	CHAPTERS 8-12	CHAPTERS 13-16	DAVID chosen, trained, tested, protected . . . CHAPTERS 17-31	
Attitude of the People	Public trust				Public disillusionment		
Theme	Though leaders and nations change, God's purposes always move forward.						
Key Verses	8:6-9; 13:14						
Christ in 1 Samuel	Typified in Samuel, who was a prophet, priest, and judge; also portrayed in the life of David . . . shepherd, king, and born in Bethlehem						

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SECOND SAMUEL

	David's Triumphs		David's Troubles			Appendix
	Reigning in Hebron over Judea	Reigning in Jerusalem over all Israel	With himself	With his family	With his nation	Miscellaneous narratives
	David's lament (1) David's crowning (2) David's increase (3–4)	A new capital (5) A new worship center (6) A new dynasty (7) A new boundary (8) A new son (9) Another new boundary (10)	David's sin (11) Nathan's denunciation (12)	Amnon's immorality (13) Absalom's crime and flight (14) Absalom's revolt (15) Absalom's counselors (16–17) Absalom's death (18)	David's return (19) Sheba's revolt (20)	A famine (21) A song (22) A prophecy (23) A failure (24)
	CHAPTERS 1–4	CHAPTERS 5–10	CHAPTERS 11–12	CHAPTERS 13–18	CHAPTERS 19–20	CHAPTERS 21–24
Theme	Blessings or consequences follow every action.					
Key Verses	7:12–13					
Christ in 2 Samuel	Foreshadowed in David's reign, which, though imperfect, is characterized by justice, wisdom, and integrity; the Messiah, the Son of David, is promised as an offspring of the Davidic line and One who will sit upon David's throne forever.					

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Now, turn to 1 Samuel to look more closely at some key events leading up to David's rise from obscurity.

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Observation: Israel's Kings

Any time Pastor Chuck studies Scripture, he follows the same four steps: observation, interpretation, correlation, and application.² In the observation phase, he asks, “What does this passage say?” Only after he’s thoroughly observed the text does he consider what the passage means.

Israel Demands a Human King—1 Samuel 8:1–22

Before the establishment of the kingdom, the prophet Samuel stood as the figurehead over Israel. Yet [1 Samuel 8:1–3](#) reveals that Samuel’s life was reaching its end, and his sons were wicked men. Consequently, what request did the elders of Israel make of Samuel in [8:5](#)?

According to God’s words in [8:7](#), what did this request reveal about the Israelites?

According to [8:19–20](#), what was the real reason the Israelites made their request of Samuel?



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Replacing a King with a Shepherd—1 Samuel 13:1–14; 16:1–13

Because Israel wanted to be like their neighboring nations, God gave them a king who would satisfy their shallow desires. When Samuel first presented King Saul to the people, the passage notes that he stood “head and shoulders above anyone else.” Overjoyed at this image of their mighty hero, the people shouted, “Long live the king!” (1 Samuel 10:23–24).

Throughout his reign, however, the sheen on Saul's heroic image tarnished. What accusation did Samuel make against Saul in 13:13?

According to Samuel's words in 13:14, what characteristic did Saul lack that the new king would possess?

According to 16:7, why did God ultimately choose David over Saul?



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King Saul was no role model. He lacked certain key qualities that God desired in the leader of His chosen people. And He recognized these very traits in young David.



Interpretation: Qualities of a Heart Like God's

When Pastor Chuck interprets a passage, he asks, "What does this passage *mean*?" Careful students of Scripture always trace the steps of their interpretations back to observations from the text and then formulate theological principles.

A theological principle is a universal truth—either about God, God's plan, humanity, or creation—that is valuable for all people at all times. Theological principles state what God wants people to *know* and *believe* which, in turn, leads them to pure worship, right thinking, and upright living.



***Searching the Scriptures* Study Tool: Free Online Bible Study Resources**

When studying Scripture, you occasionally will encounter an element of a passage that feels too distant, too complex, or too confusing to understand based on your observations alone. In these instances, Pastor Chuck recommends turning to resources written by Bible scholars. Consult these free online resources as you interpret the events of David's life: [Constable's Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org, [Holman Bible Dictionary](http://studylight.org) at studylight.org, [Bible maps](http://insight.org) at insight.org.

God doesn't look for perfection in potential leaders. Instead, according to the first part of [2 Chronicles 16:9](#), what quality does God seek? Based on what you discover, write a principle that reflects the meaning of this verse.

God is looking for men and women whose hearts are completely His, who grieve over wrong and long for their lives to count for Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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What else did God find in David, according to *Psalms* 78:70–72 and 89:19–20? What principle can you draw from David's example as a "servant" and a "common" person?

The first quality is sensitivity to God, "My heart is completely Yours." The second is humility, "God, I want to serve You and others." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How do the portraits of Saul and David in the account of 1 Samuel differ? How does their character differ? How does their rise to the throne differ? What timeless truths can followers of Jesus today learn from this contrast?

God found in David what Saul lacked: spirituality, humility, and integrity . . . qualities anyone can cultivate!

God's choice of a person is contrary to human reason. You're no different, in essence, than David. There was nothing about David on the surface that impressed God and caused God to say, "Wow! That is My man!" But David had character. And that's what God saw.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Selected Scriptures



Correlation: Boasting in Christ

In the correlation phase of Bible study, Pastor Chuck turns to other portions of Scripture to shed more light on the theological truths developed through interpretation.

Read [1 Corinthians 1:26–31](#). According to [1:26–28](#) how does God view what the world prizes most: power, wealth, and worldly wisdom?

According to [1:29–30](#), how should God's perspective on these matters affect those who believe in Jesus?

In your own words, summarize the profound statement in [1:31](#). How does this theological truth help provide a fuller perspective on the story of Saul and David from 1 Samuel?



God's Heart, God's Man, God's Ways

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The shepherd David stood small in the shadow of King Saul's power and influence. But God uses the powerless to shame the powerful, and He did so by putting a man of great faith on the throne. God wants to use all His people to serve His purposes with a heart like David's.



Application: Pursuing God's Heart

God cultivated the qualities of spirituality, humility, and integrity throughout David's life in four ways:

1. *In solitude*: David spent countless hours alone with God outside with his sheep.
2. *In obscurity*: David showed commitment in the unseen, unappreciated matters of life.
3. *In monotony*: David remained faithful to God—day by day—in his mundane routine.
4. *In reality*: David maintained a consistent, authentic relationship with God.

How do you sense God working in the solitude, obscurity, monotony, and reality of your present situation?
How is God shaping you into the person of spirituality, humility, and integrity He has called you to be?

It's in the little things we prove ourselves capable for the big things. When God develops inner qualities, He's never in a hurry. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



God's Heart, God's Man, God's Ways

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Christians historically have strengthened their relationship with God through the practice of spiritual disciplines: prayer, Scripture memorization, fasting, solitude, and many others. How can you incorporate one of these disciplines into your routine this week to cultivate in your life the attributes of spirituality, humility, and integrity?

David is one of the greatest role models because he understood that God looks at the heart. He allowed this truth to guide his entire life. Even when no one knew his name, David maintained an intimate relationship with God, and God used this time of obscurity to prepare David for great things to come. God wants to use you to do great things for His Son and His kingdom too—even if no one ever knows your name.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I praise You because You are more concerned with the state of my heart than my outward appearance. Please use my seasons of obscurity to cultivate in me the characteristics of spirituality, humility, and integrity as I seek to pursue Your heart. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*, Great Lives from God's Word (Dallas: Word, 1997), xii.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWO

A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

If you and I had been Jews living in 1020 BC, all our attention would have focused upon King Saul. He was taking the country by storm. However, about that time, a nobody was keeping the sheep along the Judean hillside near the hamlet of Bethlehem. A little boy that nobody noticed by the name of David.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE human body is one of God's most marvelous and intricate creations. It also is one of the most fragile. If the lungs no longer expand to take in oxygen, if the heart ceases to pump blood throughout the body, if the brain's synapses stop firing, life can end in just a few moments.

Thankfully, God designed the human body to do these and countless other functions subconsciously. A person could go through an entire lifetime without even noticing that his or her lungs, heart, and brain are sustaining life.

The body of Christ works in a similar way to the human body. No one part is more important than the others, and all the parts work in tandem to sustain the presence of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Some believers, however, have such a profound love for God and a deep commitment to Christ that the mission of the kingdom would suffer greatly without their efforts.

And often, nobody notices these heroes of the faith.



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A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

God's way of doing things subverts human tendencies in almost every way. While the world picks people of power, influence, and prominence to do great things, God uses nobodies. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at 1 Samuel 15:24–16:13 to see how God chose David—a nobody, nobody noticed—to be king over Israel and to serve God's greater purposes.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before David donned the majestic robes of a king, he wore the simple tunic of a shepherd. Few in ancient Israel respected shepherds, but they held an indispensable role in society. Use [Psalm 23:1–4](#) to help you prepare your heart before turning to the Scriptures.

*The LORD is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Saul, Israel's first king, was the tallest and strongest man in Israel. The Israelites wanted to have a mighty warrior-king like their neighboring nations. God granted their request. Yet Saul was the king the *people* wanted . . . not the king *God* wanted.



A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

After years of Saul's reign, God said, "I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command" (1 Samuel 15:11). What did Samuel say in [15:27–28](#) when he confronted Saul about his unfaithfulness to God?

Saul likely wondered, *Who is better than me?* After all, the people of Israel made Saul king because no one was better than him . . . physically speaking. However, God desired to set a spiritually strong person over His nation to guide them into a deep, faithful relationship with Him. God desired a spiritual hero—one *nobody* expected.



Observation: People Choose . . . God Corrects

Successful Bible study always results in practical application. Yet the fruit of application grows out of interpretation of a passage's meaning. And meaning always finds its roots in observation.¹ Read [1 Samuel 16:1–13](#), and observe what the words of the text say. As you read, pay special attention to Samuel's reaction to the events recorded in the passage.

Previously, the shallow people of Israel selected Saul to be their king. According to [16:1](#), who would select the *new* king?



A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

How did Samuel react in *1 Samuel 16:6* when he saw Jesse's first son Eliab? According to *16:7*, why did he react this way? Why did God ultimately *not* choose Eliab to be king?

As Jesse paraded each of his sons before Samuel, what was God's answer for each as to whether or not he would be king?

Abinadab (*1 Samuel 16:8*): _____

Shimea (*16:9*): _____

Jesse's next four sons (*16:10*): _____

Although Jesse showed Samuel seven of his sons, he had eight. According to *16:11*, where was this last son while Samuel was meeting the seven other sons?



A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

According to 1 Samuel 16:12, what did God say when Samuel met David, Jesse's final son? What did Samuel do in response in 16:13?

Not even David's own father noticed the spiritual depth of the lowly shepherd out in the fields. Yet God saw David's heart, and He would turn this overlooked boy into a king.

Jesse reveals two very common mistakes made by parents. Number one, he didn't have an equal appreciation for all his children. And number two, he failed to cultivate a mutual self-respect among them. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: People Forget . . . God Remembers

Pastor Chuck Swindoll notes that interpretation requires determining what a passage of Scripture *means*, not “imposing your opinions on the Bible.”² This principle is especially important when the meaning of a passage may feel difficult to accept.

How did Samuel's response to his conversation with God in 1 Samuel 16:1–2 reveal his lack of trust in God's plan? How is Samuel's example instructive for followers of Jesus today?



A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

Why did Jesse show Samuel all his sons *except* David? What did Samuel's response in [1 Samuel 16:6](#) reveal about what both he and Jesse considered most important for Israel's future king? Similarly, what does this scene reveal about David, especially in comparison with his brothers? (Hint: Remember God's word in [16:7](#).)

If I could change one thing about my focus, I would like to see people not by face but by heart. Wouldn't that be a marvelous ability? What discernment! Now, you see, we're not able to do that. We have limited focus. Only God can do that. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: God Comes . . . People Reject

Imagine how the people of Bethlehem reacted when they heard that the young shepherd David would be king. They likely wouldn't have believed it! David's experience parallels that of Jesus' in this way. The gospels say very little about Jesus' life between His birth and His public ministry. For much of Jesus' life, He too was a nobody, nobody noticed.

[Mark 6:1–6](#) tells of Jesus teaching in His hometown, Nazareth, among people who knew Him and His family well. According to [6:2](#), how did these old acquaintances respond to Jesus' teaching?



A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

According to [Mark 6:3](#), why did the people from Nazareth respond this way? What detail about their response does this verse add?

According to [6:5](#), what was the result of the crowd's reaction to Jesus?

The people of Nazareth saw Jesus as nothing more than the carpenter Joseph's son. And how could God use a nobody like Him? Because the people adopted this narrow perspective of God's power, they missed out on the blessings that God wanted to shower upon them. And God still wants to use nobodies to unfold His purposes in the world today.



Application: God Speaks . . . We Apply

Pastor Chuck sees three timeless lessons taught through this account of a nobody chosen by God that can instruct those who follow Him today:

1. *God's solutions are often strange and simple. Be open!* God's will isn't complicated. He has less interest in external appearance and more concern for inner holiness.
2. *God's promotions are usually sudden and surprising. Be ready!* You never know when God will call on you to fill a need. And He will use you . . . if you'll allow Him.
3. *God's selections are always sovereign and sure. Be calm!* Times will come when the world feels shrouded in darkness—hopeless. Trust in Him. He knows what He's doing.



A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13

In what ways do you find society evaluating people based on outward appearance rather than the heart? If you also feel the temptation to do so, how would shifting more of your own focus toward others' hearts affect your relationships?

Oh, for the ability to see beyond the obvious. To see beyond the bad track record. To see beyond the age or the looks or the lack of intelligence. To see worth and value down deep inside. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Do you ever feel like a nobody—as if nobody notices your hard work, your good character, your care for others? How does the example of David speak to your situation and encourage you today?

God can use *anyone* to do amazing things—even a nobody like David. God saw the pure heart of this otherwise unknown shepherd and chose David to rule and lead His people. David's situation, however, is not one-of-a-kind. God still looks at the heart today, and He still searches for nobodies who are ready to serve Him.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWO

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

A Nobody, Nobody Noticed

1 Samuel 15:24–16:13



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I praise You for the way You have worked out Your good purposes in the world. Thank You for using nobodies like David to extend Your love to those who need it most. I ask You to use me in this way. Work in my heart to clean out my sin so I might participate in the wonderful plan for Your creation. I pray these things in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 111.



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DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY THREE

Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23

God put together the missing link needed to bring David to the throne . . . a guy who'd heard that Saul was depressed and who happened to know about David's gift. It's just beautiful how God used the gift of music to put David right into the very presence of the king's chamber.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

FEW would deny the beauty of music. A song can tell in a few verses a story that would otherwise fill a whole book. An old familiar tune can recall a memory that would otherwise remain long forgotten. The perfect blend of lyric and melody can soothe the emotions of a heart that would otherwise stay hard and jagged.

Before David held the king's scepter, he carried a shepherd's staff. But his hands also bore the musician's lyre. This gift earned him a spot in the court of Saul—the king he one day would replace. When David met Saul, he faced a choice of whether to use his gift to serve the man God had rejected or to undermine the authority of the sitting king.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will act as a bard singing the song of David's encounter with Saul recorded in 1 Samuel 16:14–23. David chose to use his gifts for good, demonstrating how followers of Jesus Christ should use their gifts to serve His purposes today.



Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before you open the Word of God, use [Psalm 108:1–5](#), a song written by David himself, to prepare your heart. Offer his lyrics to God as a personal prayer.

*My heart is confident in you, O God;
no wonder I can sing your praises with all my heart!
Wake up, lyre and harp!
I will wake the dawn with my song.
I will thank you, LORD, among all the people.
I will sing your praises among the nations.
For your unfailing love is higher than the heavens.
Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.
May your glory shine over all the earth.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Israelites wanted to be like other nations. They didn't want God as their transcendent, divine King. No, they wanted a mighty king, a warrior king . . . a *human* king. So God granted them what they *wanted* even though it wasn't what they *needed*. King Saul perfectly fit the job description of “a king like those of other nations.” And Israel was ready to follow its new king anywhere.

Yet Saul did not have a heart for God. He pursued wickedness, and he started leading God's people down a path of sin that would have left them far from God. In [1 Samuel 16:1–13](#), God anointed a new king—the humble shepherd named David.

But at this time, Saul was still alive and sitting on the throne. Soon enough, the current king and the future king would meet face-to-face. What would David do when he met his soon-to-be predecessor? Turn to [16:14–23](#) to find out!



Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23



Observation: Saul's Strange Malady, David's Unique Ability

According to the method explained in *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll begins by asking the same question when he studies a passage of Scripture: What does the text say?¹ Read [1 Samuel 16:14–23](#), and carefully observe the *actions* the text says David took in his earliest encounters with King Saul.

According to [16:14](#), what happened to Saul after God “rejected him as king of Israel” (16:1)? Check a few Bible versions and write down the ways different translators describe Saul’s condition.

The spiritual torment Saul experienced became evident to those around him, so they wanted to help. According to [16:16](#), how did Saul’s servants suggest that he address the difficulties caused by this evil spirit? In the ancient world, many believed that this practice could soothe passions, heal mental illness, and even calm riots!

List the six ways Saul’s servant described David in [16:18](#).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

According to *1 Samuel 16:21*, how did Saul feel about David? What did Saul do for David?

Why did Saul feel so positively about David? According to *16:23*, what did David do for Saul?

God brought David to the throne room not *to take* the throne but *to serve* King Saul with his gift of music. David's willingness to serve God in this way revealed trust in God's plan, and David's example abounds with theological truths valuable for God's people across time.



Interpretation: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In David's day, before the temple existed, God's glorious presence "filled the tabernacle"—the mobile "temple" Israel used during its nomadic years (*Exodus 40:34–35*). Later, David's son, Solomon, would erect a permanent temple to house God's presence (*1 Kings 8:11*).



Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23

Occasionally, however, the Spirit of the Lord would indwell someone who needed divine empowerment, wisdom, or guidance (for example, see [Judges 3:10](#); [6:34](#); [11:29](#); [13:25](#)). After God accomplished His purpose through this person, though, His Spirit would depart.

A new era of the Holy Spirit's ministry began at Pentecost. Now, God baptizes those who trust in Christ with the Holy Spirit ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)), empowers believers with spiritual gifts to serve one other ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#)), and permanently seals them for “the day of redemption” ([Ephesians 4:30](#)).

According to [Ephesians 2:19–22](#), to what does the apostle Paul compare the people of God (see especially [2:21](#))? How does this truth provide comfort to those who fear God might take His spirit away from them?

Why was David able to deliver Saul from the tormenting evil spirit? (Note the contrast between David and Saul presented in [1 Samuel 16:14](#) and [16:18](#).) For more information on this element of the passage, see [Constable's Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#).



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY THREE

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23

Prior to these events, Saul had not yet met David, so Saul knew nothing about David other than what his servants told him. What key event happened to David in [1 Samuel 16:1–13](#), *right before* he met Saul? How did David treat Saul despite what happened in the previous scene? What does David's treatment of Saul reveal about his character?

I think it's beautiful that David never once pulled rank on Saul. He was never jealous or envious of Saul's position. David had been anointed, but he'd let the Lord open the door.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Singing Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs

Music plays a key role in the church of Jesus Christ. Read [Ephesians 5:15–20](#). As you read, write down three or four commands that stand out to you.



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Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23

The Greek syntax of this passage creates a connection between [Ephesians 5:18](#) and [5:19](#). So “singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” is the *result* of being filled with the Holy Spirit. How is this kind of spiritual singing naturally related to the presence of the Holy Spirit among believers in Jesus Christ? How is this truth instructive for those who believe in Him today?

Music is an essential element of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And God’s gift of music allows believers to serve those in need in powerfully unique ways.



Application: Music’s Effective Ministry

By playing music for Saul in his moments of deepest distress, David provided Saul with a feeling described in Hebrew as *ravach*—a term used to show Saul spreading himself out with a sense of *relief* and *refreshment*.

Think about the music you’ve enjoyed over the past week. How did this music affect you? Did it bring you refreshment and relief? Or did it foster within you negative emotions like anxiety or anger? How does this reflection affect how you might think about your choice of music going forward?



Soft Music for a Hard Heart

1 Samuel 16:14–23

What unique gifts has God given you? You may wonder how God can use these gifts, but He wants to use these gifts to minister to those He's placed in your life. How do you sense God calling you to use your gifts to meet the needs of others?

You will be beloved when you minister to people—for helping them in their misery and malady. You'll be attached to their heart, and you can't drive a wedge between it. In the simplest things, the things that just come naturally to you, you minister to others.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

God used David's musical gifts to bring Saul relief and refreshment from the torment of the evil spirit. However, Saul would face the oppression of that spirit so long as he stood in opposition to God. Many today feel tormented by sin, and while good music may temporarily provide relief, only the grace of God found in faith in Jesus Christ will *permanently* fill a soul with true peace.



A FINAL PRAYER

Thank You, Father, for the way You unfold Your marvelous plan for Your creation—both in the time of David and today. I ask You to give me eyes to see how I can use my gifts to serve others now and wisdom to know that You can and will use these gifts in unlikely ways to serve Your purposes in the future. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY FOUR

David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54

David stood before this massive creature unintimidated. That's our battle when we face the giants. They intimidate us. We forget whom we represent. And standing there with our knees knocking, I wonder what God must think. He says, "My power is available. There's no one on this earth greater than I. Trust Me."

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EVERYONE loves an underdog story. When the slow-and-steady tortoise bests the quick-yet-careless hare, when the once last-place team hoists the championship trophy, when an employee in the mail room climbs the corporate ladder to CEO, you can't help but smile seeing the payoff for all the hard work, patience, and determination.

History tells of no greater underdog than the shepherd boy named David. When Israel's strongest warriors shrank under the threat of the giant Goliath, David stood tall, ready to fight for his people and his God. Though everyone doubted David's chances, David fought Goliath anyway.

For what David lacked in strength and stature, he made up in faith.

The account of David and Goliath preserved in 1 Samuel 17:1–54 places the reader within the ranks of the army of Israel staring down Goliath. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will ask who the *real* giant is, and it will consider what it takes to have giant-sized faith.



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David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54



PREPARE YOUR HEART

The book of Psalms has preserved many of David's songs for the people of God to sing. These songs touch every circumstance—joy and lament, prosperity and poverty, defeat and victory. Pray these words of victory from *Psalms* 27:1–3 before you open God's Word today.

*The LORD is my light and my salvation—
so why should I be afraid?
The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger,
so why should I tremble?
When evil people come to devour me,
when my enemies and foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.
Though a mighty army surrounds me,
my heart will not be afraid.
Even if I am attacked,
I will remain confident.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

If David's life could teach one lesson, it would be, "People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

The people of Israel saw that Saul stood head-and-shoulders above everyone else, so they chose him to be their king. Those who knew David saw him just as a modest shepherd—*nothing special*. God, however, saw the hearts of these two men. He flipped the people's expectations upside down and chose David to replace Saul as king because David had a heart for God.

When the Israelites beheld the enormous stature of their enemy Goliath, they proved once again that people look only at external appearances. When no one else in Israel believed that God would preserve His people, God knew that David had faith, and 1 Samuel 17:1–54 shows how God used this faith to fell even the giant Goliath.



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54



Observation: The Physical Giant Goliath

Good observation requires a careful reading of the text, even when it's tempting to skip over familiar sections. Read [1 Samuel 17:1–54](#) slowly. Look at every word, answering the question, “What does this passage say?”¹

Goliath before Israel—1 Samuel 17:1–11

As the army of Israel stared down the Philistines on the opposite side of the Elah Valley, a lone man stepped out of the Philistine ranks and stood between the two armies. Their champion. Goliath. Describe the appearance of this figure in [1 Samuel 17:4–5](#).



Searching the Scriptures Study Tool: Geographical Setting

Using a Bible [atlas](#), locate the city of Gath, Goliath's home. To see a satellite image of the Valley of Elah, a diagram of the possible site of the battle between David and Goliath, and photographs of the valley, see “[The Valley of Elah](#)” at biblewalks.com.

What challenge did Goliath pose to the Israelites in [17:8–9](#)? How did Saul—along with the rest of Israel's warriors—respond in [17:11](#) to Goliath's challenge? (See also [17:24](#).)



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54

David before Saul—1 Samuel 17:12–39

While his brothers joined the fray, David stayed behind to tend to the flocks. But David's father Jesse sent him to bring his brothers supplies. What did David say to Saul in [1 Samuel 17:32](#) after first seeing Goliath? How did Saul respond to David in [17:33](#)?

According to [17:34–36](#), what evidence did David offer to convince Saul that he could fight Goliath? According to [17:37](#), what was the *real* reason for David's confidence?

I imagine about now David was blinking and thinking, "What giant? The only giant in my life is God. God doesn't fight on the basis of size and intelligence. God is omnipotent! And if He's on my side, I can't lose." Saul hadn't learned that. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54

David before Goliath—1 Samuel 17:40–54

King Saul offered David what help he could—from his weapons to his personal armor. But David rejected Saul's assistance and chose to fight Goliath using only his shepherd's staff, his sling, and five smooth stones. When David—looking small and unprepared for battle—approached Goliath, what was Goliath's impression of David according to [1 Samuel 17:42–44](#)?

In one or two sentences, summarize David's address to Goliath in [17:45–47](#). (Note how often David mentions God!)

Goliath may have stood taller than any man David had ever encountered, but David felled him with a perfectly timed shot from his sling. None who witnessed this battle would have bet on David outmatching Goliath's strength. No, David could not have won this battle on his own. And David himself admitted this fact, declaring, "This is the LORD's battle" (17:47).



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54



Interpretation: The Spiritual Giant David

In *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll described the benefit of good Bible study. He writes, “You’ll become more stable in your faith; you’ll be able to stand on your own as you master the science of interpretation.”²

The account of David’s miraculous triumph over Goliath is more than a fanciful myth or a tall tale designed simply to tell a good story. Rather, it was a *real* event whose record God chose to preserve in His Word to teach His people timeless theological truths upon which they can stand.

While Goliath was the most intimidating Philistine, Saul was the strongest and tallest Israelite. That’s why he was king! Yet when Goliath demanded a champion from Israel, the king hid behind the shepherd. How did Saul’s attitude contrast with David’s in this episode with Goliath? What do their differing attitudes reveal about their faith in God?

What timeless theological truths can believers in Jesus Christ learn from this passage? How is David’s example instructive for Christians who face impossible circumstances today?

Hindsight gives a lot of insight. When you look back, you always know a better way. Unless you’re David. David had the character it took to see the present as though seeing with hindsight. What a wise young man! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54



Correlation: Fighting the Real Battle

A thousand years after the life of David, God would send a new champion to fight on behalf of his people—His own son, Jesus Christ. Yet Jesus did not come to battle for wealth and land. Rather, He entered the fray to win souls back from sin and death, and He fought to defend God's purposes and plan against Satan's schemes.

Read [Matthew 16:13–19](#). What powerful confession did Peter make about Jesus' identity?

What truth did Jesus share with Peter about the church and its battle against the powers of hell, the *true* giant at war with His people?

God magnifies His name when we are weak. You don't have to be eloquent or strong or handsome or beautiful or brilliant to be blessed by God. All He asks of you is that you trust Him, that you stand before Him in integrity and faith, and He'll pick up the pieces.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54



Application: Facing Goliaths Today

God's people encounter their own unique "giants"—impossibly huge challenges—every day. Regarding these giants, the following application principles still ring true:

1. *Facing giants is an intimidating experience.*
2. *Doing battle is a lonely experience.*
3. *Trusting God is a stabilizing experience.*
4. *Winning victories is a memorable experience.*

In the space below, record a time you experienced victory through your faith in God. How did this experience shape your perspective, allowing you to see your circumstances more clearly from God's perspective the next time you faced hardship?

What giants do you face today?



David and the Dwarf

1 Samuel 17:1–54

How can you lean on your Christian community as you face your giants? Remember, you never are alone because Christ is with you in the fight. What are some practical ways you can show your trust in Him amid these difficulties?

Through his faith in God, David proved to be the *true* giant who would conquer the spiritually weak Goliath. Some may think their current circumstances are so hard that they'd *rather* face Goliath. But no matter how great the giant, God is greater. And He will give you the strength to face that challenge. All He asks is that you trust Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I praise You because You are greater than my harshest doubts, my biggest worries, and my most fearsome enemies. Increase my faith, and help me remember this truth when I feel too small to face the challenges of this life. Give me the courage to face whatever giants threaten me today and to trust You each step of the way. I ask these things in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 110.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY FIVE

Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

David had done nothing to deserve the treatment Saul gave him. His motive was right. His action was right. But Saul was jealous, so he misunderstood. I'll tell you . . . life is not fair! The wicked prosper and the righteous are afflicted. But God knows what He's doing.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

N*o good deed goes unpunished!* Have you ever heard that cynical quip? People usually blurt it out when helping someone backfires, and instead of thanks, they get trouble in return.

However, the truth is, God sees every act of sacrifice, generosity, and love. With God, no good deed goes *unnoticed*. He smiles upon His children when they reflect His heart, and He “rewards those who sincerely seek him” (*Hebrews 11:6*).

Yet it doesn't always feel like God is watching when an act of love receives no reciprocation. When giving generously results in financial hardship. Or when the acclaim from a heroic action generates jealousy and animosity in others.

Although David's defeat of Goliath saved the nation, it also stirred up a bees' nest of trouble for him. His victory over one enemy created a new one: King Saul.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at the early days of Saul's long hatred for David. David may have felt he was being “punished” for doing good, but God's favor never left him. David's example of patiently trusting in God through mistreatment reveals what followers of Jesus can do when they face opposition, despite—or even because of—their faithfulness to God.



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Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Pray the wisdom-rich words of *Psalms* 37:1–6, asking God to fill you with wisdom as you face your enemies.

*Don't worry about the wicked
or envy those who do wrong.
For like grass, they soon fade away.
Like spring flowers, they soon wither.
Trust in the LORD and do good.
Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.
Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you your heart's desires.
Commit everything you do to the LORD.
Trust him, and he will help you.
He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn,
and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

With Goliath leading their war machine, the Philistines threatened to crush the newly formed kingdom of Israel. The young shepherd looked nothing like a warrior, but David defied expectations. He defeated Goliath because of his faith in God, winning both the battle and the hearts of the people. With a whirl of his sling, David became the most famous man in Israel.

But the most beloved person in the kingdom *should* be the king. At least, that's how Saul felt. Saul didn't know that God had already chosen David to replace him as king. Turn now to *1 Samuel* 17:55–18:9 to see the genesis of the souring of Saul's relationship with his heir apparent.



Observation: Four Different Relationships

Pastor Chuck Swindoll's approach to Bible study—as described in his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*—begins with observing a passage of Scripture. He looks carefully at every word, every sentence, every paragraph and asks, “What does the text say?”¹ Read *1 Samuel* 17:55–18:9 this way.



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

David under Saul—1 Samuel 17:55–58

News about David's defeat of Goliath spread quickly. What inquiry did Saul make about David's identity just before and after David's battle with Goliath? He made this inquiry *three times* in *1 Samuel 17:55–56, 58*.

How did David respond to Saul's inquiry in *17:58*? What strikes you about David's response?

David with Jonathan—1 Samuel 18:1–4

David's proximity to King Saul allowed him to get close to his son, Jonathan. What expressions does *1 Samuel 18:1* and *18:3* use to describe the friendship between Jonathan and David?



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

According to 1 Samuel 18:4, what did Jonathan do for David in light of their friendship?

God knew that David needed an intimate friend—a kindred spirit—to go through the valley that was ahead of him. These men needed to embrace and relate and love one another and assure each other with God’s encouragement at low tides. It’s beautiful. And we need that in our lives as well. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

David before Israel—1 Samuel 18:5–7

David proved his worth to Saul by killing Goliath, and Saul honored David by giving him more responsibilities. According to 1 Samuel 18:5, how did David fare in the assignments Saul gave him? Consequently, how did the people of Israel view David according to 18:5–7?



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

Saul versus David—1 Samuel 18:8–9

According to [1 Samuel 18:8](#), what was Saul's emotional response to Israel's newfound love for David? How did the events of this passage affect Saul's relationship with David, according to [18:9](#)?

David became an overnight celebrity. Very few people could take that all in stride, but David did. He knew how to live with success without having it affect him. It's a rare person who can do that . . . especially if he or she is young and has never lived before the public.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Learning from David's Relationships

The interpretation phase of Bible study examines timeless theological truths based on a passage of Scripture. The author of 1 Samuel draws out four themes: submission, affection, exaltation, and opposition. After you answer each question below, *write your own timeless principle* based on David's example that believers in Jesus Christ can follow.

How did David show *submission* as he found himself in the court of King Saul ([1 Samuel 17:55–58](#) and [18:2, 5](#))? Remember, David had been anointed as Israel's next king, but Saul didn't know.



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

How did David and Jonathan show brotherly *affection* for one another amid David's tumultuous relationship with Saul (1 Samuel 18:1–4)? For some insight into the meaning of the expressions used to describe their friendship, check out [Constable's Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org.

How do you think David responded to the people's *exaltations* (18:5–7)? (Note: you can learn interpretive principles both from what the text says and from what it does *not* say.)

Based on the character of David presented in this entire passage, how might you expect David to respond to the *opposition* from King Saul in the coming passages (18:8–9)?

Throughout this season of David's life, he remained humble—despite knowledge that he would soon replace Saul as king and despite the praise poured on him by the people. This posture kept his focus away from himself and on his God. *What an example!*



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9



Correlation: David's Success and Wisdom

First Samuel 18:5 notes that David “prospered” (NASB) in every task Saul assigned to him. The Hebrew verb translated “to prosper” or “to succeed” is *sakal*, and this verb is often used specifically to describe someone walking in wisdom or insight.

Read the following proverbs containing the verb *sakal*. Describe how David showed the characteristics praised in each proverb, and how they are relevant for you to apply in your season of life.

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 16:23

Proverbs 21:11



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

David's wise actions were rooted in his trust in God. He rested in God's protection and remained faithful while serving Saul—even when Saul hated him. Many today find themselves in a position like David's, wondering how to trust God in the face of a fearsome enemy.



Application: Persisting in Good Deeds

Three points of application arise from David's example during his time of transition from being a nobody to taking center stage in Israel's story—despite Saul's opposition.

1. *Not knowing the future forces us to take one day at a time.* David didn't know why he faced such fierce opposition from Saul, but he trusted God and poured out his heart to Him.
2. *Having a friend helps us face whatever comes our way.* Jonathan provided David a lifeline during his seasons of trial—extending encouragement, love, and support.
3. *Being positive and wise is the best reaction to an enemy.* David knew he would be king. He could have taken Saul's throne by force, but he trusted God's timing. How wise!

Do you ever feel like you're experiencing punishment for your good deeds? How can trusting that God sees these good deeds and holds the future in His hands change your perspective?



Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

Do you have a dear friend like Jonathan—a friend with whom you can lock arms on your spiritual journey? How has this friendship encouraged you in your walk with God? How can you be a Jonathan to someone in your life today?

What is your gut reaction when a Saul-like person attacks you? What would it look like for you to adopt a wise attitude like David's the next time you face an enemy?

David's good deeds earned him both fans and foes, yet neither led him to think too highly of himself. He trusted that God would make him king in His time, and all the while, he maintained an openhanded posture of a servant. Regardless of the opposition you might face today, trust your sovereign God.



A FINAL PRAYER

As you close your Bible today, offer this prayer from Pastor Chuck:

Father, show us the difference between what pleases us and what pleases You. Develop within us a sheer desire that we'll less and less even consider the option of disobedience. Help us be like David—to stand fast, to do what is right without tiring of it. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SIX

Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

I'll tell you, when every one of your crutches is removed, things begin to erode. As the erosion continues, you begin to think differently. And then you begin to lose sight of the truth. And then you hit bottom. But God will hold you up.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IF you've ever broken a leg, you know firsthand the immense value of a crutch. A crutch did what your broken leg couldn't. If you wanted to walk, you needed your crutch. If you removed it, in a matter of moments, you would have found yourself facedown on the pavement.

Every human being will rely on crutches for support throughout life—not necessarily because of a broken leg but because of a broken soul. Sin leads many to mold God's good gifts like successful careers, financial security, or loving mates into crutches for the soul. While these crutches and others are common and socially acceptable, they eventually will crack and buckle under the weight of a person's soul. Those who cling to them will only crumble with them . . .

But there is a crutch, a lone crutch, strong enough to support the soul.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at David's painful season where God kicked out every broken crutch, one by one, from his life. Then, we'll consider who is the unbreaking support, the one perfect crutch we can always lean on when the weight of life is too great to bear.



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Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



PREPARE YOUR HEART

First Samuel 18–21 discusses Saul's mission to kill David. While he was running, David wrote psalms about the weight of his circumstances. As you prepare to read about these events, offer to God the words of [Psalm 59:1–4](#).

*Rescue me from my enemies, O God.
Protect me from those who have come to destroy me.
Rescue me from these criminals;
save me from these murderers.
They have set an ambush for me.
Fierce enemies are out there waiting, LORD,
though I have not sinned or offended them.
I have done nothing wrong,
yet they prepare to attack me.
Wake up! See what is happening and help me!*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

After David slayed the Philistine giant, Goliath, he became an overnight celebrity in Israel. His continued success in combat led the people to write a song about him ([1 Samuel 18:7](#)):

*Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands!*

As you might imagine, King Saul did not like seeing his glory given to a shepherd boy. While David's popularity grew so also did Saul's jealousy of him. This jealousy would lead Saul to do anything to stop David's rise to power. Saul's fierce pursuit of David, beginning in 1 Samuel 18, kickstarts David's crutch-kicking season. *How would he respond?*



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Observation: David's Crutches Removed

Read [1 Samuel 19:8–22](#); [20:1–4](#), [30–33](#), [41–42](#); [21:10–14](#) and keep track of the supports David lost. Also, pay special attention to those areas where the text says that David “fled” or “escaped.”

David's First Crutch—1 Samuel 19:8–10

Once Saul's jealousy had been aroused, he had one goal: to kill David. His first attack occurred in [1 Samuel 18:10–12](#). Despite Saul's act of malice, David remained in service to the king. However, David wouldn't stick around for more murder attempts!

What event recorded in [19:8](#) precipitated Saul's assault on David in [19:9](#)? If this was the *external* reason for Saul's attack, what was in the *internal* reason according to [19:9](#)? See also [16:14](#).

According to [19:10](#), how did David respond to Saul's attempt to take his life?



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

David's Second Crutch—1 Samuel 19:11–17

Because of David's victory over Goliath, Saul gave David his daughter Michal in marriage—just as Saul had promised according to [1 Samuel 17:25](#) (see also [18:17–30](#)). According to [19:12–14](#), what did Michal do to protect David from Saul's attack?

David's Third Crutch—1 Samuel 19:18–22; 20:1

According to [1 Samuel 19:18–22](#), what events happened while David was with Samuel that allowed him to flee from Saul in [20:1](#)?



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

David's Fourth Crutch—1 Samuel 20:1–4, 30–33, 41–42

Next, David met up with his good friend Jonathan, another of Saul's children. At first, Jonathan didn't believe his own father would want to kill David, so Jonathan and David devised a plan to uncover Saul's intentions. In your own words, summarize what Saul said to Jonathan in [1 Samuel 20:30–31](#) when his son mentioned David. What did this response lead David to do in [20:41–42](#)?

David's Fifth Crutch—1 Samuel 21:10–14

When David seemed to have nowhere else to turn, he fled to Gath, home of the Philistines and Goliath. What did David do in [1 Samuel 21:13](#) to protect himself from the threat of the king of Gath?

David lost his position in the king's court. He ran from Saul and then lost the companionship of his beloved wife, spiritual mentor, and best friend. To make things worse, he forfeited all his dignity. It seemed as though David had nothing and no one. But he did have God, who would remain the source of his strength as he fled Saul's relentless pursuit.



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Interpretation: The Truth about Crutches

Only once observation is complete can a student of the Scriptures consider what the passage means and extract timeless theological truths based on this meaning.¹ Pastor Chuck Swindoll identifies three principles in this account of David losing his crutches.

1. *Crutches become substitutes for God.*
2. *Crutches keep one's focus horizontal rather than vertical.*
3. *Crutches provide only temporary relief.*

How do you see each of these three principles on display in David's life as he ran from Saul? List some specific examples from the passages discussed in the observation section.

Write your own timeless principle about crutches based on this account of David and Saul.

God doesn't give temporary relief. He offers a permanent solution. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Correlation: Leaning on God

David's son Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Thankfully, God preserved much of his wisdom in the book of Proverbs. One of these proverbs addresses the topic of crutches.

Read [Proverbs 3:5–6](#). What crutch does this proverb warn against leaning upon? Why do you think the proverb focuses specifically on this crutch? (Hint: remember who wrote this proverb!)

According to this proverb, what—or whom—should someone lean on after removing this dangerous crutch? What promise does this proverb offer those who lean appropriately?

Knowledge represents one particularly dangerous crutch that can replace a Christ-follower's dependence on God, but it isn't the only one. Application of these passages requires a careful look at one's own life to consider what crutches one might be using instead of God.



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Application: “Leaning” Lessons for Broken Souls

Based on his study of the account of Saul’s murderous pursuit of David, Pastor Chuck developed two applications about leaning on God:

1. *There is nothing wrong with leaning as long as you’re leaning on God.* Yes, David had the support of his loved ones, but he placed all his trust in God. When all his other crutches failed, God was there to hold David up.
2. *Being stripped of all substitutes for God is the most painful of all.* David may have relied on God, but that didn’t mean the loss of the support system around him was easy. He needed God all the more to carry him through that difficult time.

What crutches do you tend to reach for when you feel yourself collapsing under the weight of life?

Have you ever had an experience like David’s when the crutches you once leaned on so heavily were completely stripped away from you? How did God support you through this experience?



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

What would it look like for you to toss away these easily broken crutches and lean wholly on God? In the space below, write down a few practical steps you can take today.

David endured the difficult experience of having every last crutch stripped from his grasp. When nothing was left, the only one he could lean on was God. If you find yourself in this painful crutch-kicking season, shift all your weight to lean into and onto Christ, your eternal support. You'll never, ever regret it!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for being the support that never fails. Help me identify those crutches I tend to lean on too heavily. Though the process may be painful, I ask You to teach me to rely on You alone. I trust You, and I believe You will always hold me up. Help me remember this truth. I pray in Jesus' unfailing name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SEVEN

For Cave Dwellers Only

1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms

When the sovereign God brings us to nothing, it is to reroute our lives, not to end them.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

YOU may not notice it, but many people around you are living in caves. No, not *literal* caves. On the outside, these people's lives may look picture-perfect, but inside, their souls have retreated to a cave—an often dark, dismal, depressing, and disillusioning place.

When the world around someone seems to be crumbling, the natural human tendency is to run and hide—to seek shelter from the dangers, the fears, the worries, and the hurts of life. While a cave may provide *temporary* respite from the falling debris, such a refuge can become a prison to the one who refuses to leave its guarded walls.

Even David, a man after God's own heart, ran and hid in a cave when his burdensome circumstances threatened to crush him. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will examine David's thoughts and feelings while he was dwelling in the cave to see how God both shaped David and prepared him for what would come after the cave.

God wants to do the same things with those who still dwell in caves today.



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S7
1

For Cave Dwellers Only

1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms



PREPARE YOUR HEART

When David spent his days seeking shelter in a cave, he wrote several psalms. Confess your need for God by offering the words of [Psalm 142:1–4](#) in preparation for your study of God's Word today:

*I cry out to the LORD;
I plead for the LORD's mercy.
I pour out my complaints before him
and tell him all my troubles.
When I am overwhelmed,
you alone know the way I should turn.
Wherever I go,
my enemies have set traps for me.
I look for someone to come and help me,
but no one gives me a passing thought!
No one will help me;
no one cares a bit what happens to me.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

With each success in the arena of battle and in the political arena, David looked more and more like a king. Once King Saul realized that David posed a threat to the throne, Saul committed himself to a singular goal . . .

To kill David.

Amid Saul's pursuit, David ran for his life, giving up everything to stay alive. He forfeited his rewarding job in Saul's court. He left behind his wife, his mentor, and his best friend. When it seemed like he had lost all hope, David gave up even his own dignity to hide among his enemies, the Philistines. With all his crutches removed, all David had to lean upon was God.



For Cave Dwellers Only

1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms

According to [1 Samuel 22:1](#), what did David do after hiding among the Philistines in Gath?

According to [22:2](#), others joined David during this time. What were their reasons for siding with Israel's rejected hero?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



When David's morale sunk as low as it possibly could go, he became a refuge to those like him who had been chewed up, spat out, and left behind by society. While David and these other vagabonds found community in the haven of that cold, dark cave, David composed several psalms to God—songs dripping with earnest cries for help and heartfelt refrains of hope.

This study will look at three of these psalms: Psalms 142, 57, and 34. The following charts will guide you through observation and interpretation of each psalm individually. Then, the rest of the study will continue with correlation and application according to the method laid out in Pastor Chuck Swindoll's book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*.¹



For Cave Dwellers Only



1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms

David Admits His Need Psalm 142:1–7	
Careful students of the Bible always read a psalm’s <i>superscript</i> . This brief note often provides an interpretive key that clues the readers in to the psalm’s context, which is essential to unlocking its meaning. Read the superscript of <i>Psalms 142</i> and write down the context of its composition:	
 Observation	 Interpretation
According to <i>142:1–4</i> , how did David describe his circumstances? How does knowing the context of the psalm provide clarity to these descriptions?	The superscript calls this psalm a <i>maskil</i> , a title which comes from the verb meaning “to instruct.” What is the main lesson David was teaching through this psalm?
According to <i>142:5–6</i> , how did David respond to his circumstances?	This psalm ends abruptly, with little resolution. Why do you think David wrote it this way?

This was the lowest moment of David’s life to date. He had no security. He had no food. He had no one to talk to. He had no promise to cling to. He had no hope that anything would ever change. He was alone in a dark cave, away from everything and everybody he loved. Everybody except God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll





For Cave Dwellers Only
1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms

David Cries for Help Psalm 57:1–11	
Although Psalm 142 captures a snapshot of David at one of his lowest moments, he did not sulk in his cave forever. Rather, he recalled God’s promises to him, and his adversity drove him to his knees in prayer. In <i>Psalm 57</i> , David prayed earnestly and came to see that God—not the cave—was his <i>true</i> “protection” (57:1).	
 Observation	 Interpretation
What did David say he would do in <i>57:9–11</i> , despite the bleak outlook described in <i>57:4, 6</i> ?	What does David’s call in <i>57:2–3</i> reveal about his faith in God? (Note the verb tenses!)
Read <i>57:5</i> , then <i>57:11</i> . What stands out to you most about these two verses?	According to <i>57:5, 11</i> , what was David’s deepest desire amid his conflict with Saul?

David was saying, “Now You be gracious to me, God. I’m stretched—pulled beyond my limits. But You meet my needs.” He’s crying out his declaration of dependence.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY
STUDY SEVEN

For Cave Dwellers Only
1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms

David Humbly Receives God’s Goodness Psalm 34:1–22	
David wrote many of his psalms both <i>to</i> God and <i>for</i> the people of Israel. And he wrote <i>Psalm 34</i> for a very specific group of people—those who were “in trouble or in debt or were just discontented” (1 Samuel 22:2). As you read, imagine yourself seeking refuge in the cave among the ranks of those 400 people who had also lost all their crutches and all their hope.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
What lesson did David hope his readers would learn through this psalm (see 34:11–14)?	How would the refugees in the cave have received David’s words in 34:15–20 ?
What words of encouragement did David offer in this psalm to those facing terrible situations?	How did David’s tone and attitude change from Psalm 142 to Psalm 57 to Psalm 34?

We don’t know in what order David wrote these psalms, but looking at his life, they seem to fit in this backward order: Psalm 142 when he’s at his lowest moment on his face, Psalm 57 when he’s on his knees, and finally Psalm 34 when he’s on his feet. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

For Cave Dwellers Only

1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms



Correlation: The Perfect Refuge

David found his true refuge not in the dark recesses of the cave but in the caring embrace of his God. Nearly one thousand years later, Jesus offered the same haven in Himself.

Read [Matthew 11:28–30](#). Whom did Jesus address in [11:28](#)? What caring message did He offer them?

What two traits did Jesus use to describe himself in [11:29](#)?

1. _____
2. _____

Those desperate for shelter today need only to hide in Jesus, the ever-present help and eternal hope. This hope is available right now to any who would take hold of it.



Application: How David Changed

The cave of Adullam became not a prison but a sanctuary where David could connect with God. He entered the cave helpless but emerged hopeful. How did such a profound change come over David? Pastor Chuck offers three explanations. David was . . .

1. *Hurt enough to admit his need.* God slowly took away each of David's crutches. When the pain was so great from all he had lost, David didn't give up. He turned to God.
2. *Honest enough to cry for help.* There was no pretending or posturing with David. He directly addressed his needs to God and sought His help.
3. *Humble enough to learn from God.* David used his time of trial to learn and to grow.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SEVEN

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

For Cave Dwellers Only

1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms

Do you ever find yourself among the cave dwellers? Where do you tend to hide or seek refuge? What enemies usually drive you there?

What would it look like for you to leave your cave behind and take refuge in the rest Christ offers? Perhaps God is calling you to adopt one of the characteristics David showed during his cave-dwelling experience.

When David had nowhere else to turn, he hid in a cave. God, however, used this season to strengthen David and to remind him of His faithfulness. You might feel like David today—as if the cave you’re hiding in is your only shelter from the threats and harms of this world. Join David. Step out of your cave in faith and find comfort in the light—the light of God’s mercy and grace.



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For Cave Dwellers Only

1 Samuel 22:1–2; Selected Psalms



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for those times You brought me out of the darkest moments of my life. I ask You to show me the caves where I tend to hide so I can trust You to bring me out with Your guiding hand. Help me to find refuge in the shelter of Your wings only. I pray these things in Jesus' safe and secure name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY EIGHT

Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24

Let's learn a lesson from David: When life's most subtle temptation attempts to draw you in, refuse to yield. Trust me on this one . . . you'll never regret forgiving someone who doesn't deserve it.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

ACCORDING to James 1:14, the source of temptation is “our own desires, which entice us and drag us away” (James 1:14). Yet one temptation is *particularly* enticing . . . so alluring that it draws many in, yet so subtle that few ever recognize its magnetic pull. Is it lust? Anger? Greed?

No, life's most subtle temptation is *revenge*.

Revenge tends to disguise itself behind acceptable terms. Instead of saying, “I’m getting even!” people will say, “I’m just standing up for my rights.” This thinking naturally leads to another label for revenge: “justified retaliation.” For some, settling the score becomes a moral obligation. They take the law into their own hands and mete out their own justice as they see fit.

Likely, David felt he had the right to this “justified retaliation” against Saul. All David had done was love God, defend Israel, and serve King Saul. But Saul was jealous of David, and the king spent years in hot pursuit, trying to kill the shepherd by any means possible.

One day, however, David heard sweet revenge whispering in his ear. Saul was vulnerable, and David had a chance to get even. Would David yield to revenge's invitation?



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Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you prepare to study David's temptation, offer in prayer [Psalm 54:4–7](#). David expressed these words of trust in God right before encountering the bloodthirsty king.

*But God is my helper.
The Lord keeps me alive!
May the evil plans of my enemies be turned against them.
Do as you promised and put an end to them.
I will sacrifice a voluntary offering to you;
I will praise your name, O LORD,
for it is good.
For you have rescued me from my troubles
and helped me to triumph over my enemies.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The backdrop of David's temptation to take revenge was the ruthless paranoia Saul displayed in [1 Samuel 22–23](#). In these chapters, Saul ordered the execution of Ahimelech for aiding David and the massacre of all the priests at Nob, their wives, and their children. David also narrowly escaped when the citizens of Keilah and the Ziphites betrayed him.

After some time passed, David finally settled down in the oasis of En-gedi. This hilly region was dotted with caves which David used as hideouts. It offered the refreshment of a flowing spring and teemed with wildlife. It was a perfect "stronghold" where David could set up camp and wait until Saul gave up his chase.

Saul, however, would eventually hear of David's newest hiding spot, and he would go to trap David. But Saul wouldn't find David. David would find him. First Samuel 24 records what happened.



Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24



Observation: A Case Study on Revenge

Observe [1 Samuel 24](#) by noting the flow of the narrative. Who are the main characters? What do they say and do? In what ways do you feel the tension intensifying as the conflict comes to a peak? How is it resolved? Use these questions to guide you in the observation phase of our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method.¹

The Situation—1 Samuel 24:1–2

What news did Saul receive in [1 Samuel 24:1](#)? According to [24:2](#), how did he respond to this news?

The Temptation—1 Samuel 24:3–7

In [1 Samuel 24:3](#), Saul went to “relieve himself” in the very cave where David was hiding. Unknowingly, Saul put himself into a very vulnerable position! According to [24:4](#), what did David’s friends suggest he do with this opportune moment? What did David do instead?

Put yourself in the sandals of one of David’s soldiers. You’ve been on the run, living out of caves for too long. Finally, only by an act of God, your pursuer strolls into your cave, but he doesn’t see you. *Now’s our chance!* You hand your knife to David. The kill should be his, after all. That’s revenge. David draws the knife, tiptoes to Saul’s back, and . . . *trims Saul’s robe?*



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY EIGHT

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24

David's retinue likely would have scratched their heads at this point wondering, *Did he really just let Saul go?* David, however, had quite a different reaction. Summarize David's response in [1 Samuel 24:5–7](#). Why did David let Saul live?

The Conversation—1 Samuel 24:8–22

According to David's words in [1 Samuel 24:8–9](#), what lie did Saul believe about David? How did David clarify the truth in [24:10–11](#)?

According to David's words to Saul in [24:12–15](#), who would ultimately judge Saul's actions?



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Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24

What kinds of emotion did Saul show in response to David in [1 Samuel 24:16–21](#)? What realization did he come to in [24:20](#)? According to [24:22](#), how did the encounter end?

This is very, very important. Wrong is being done against David, and when you have been wronged, it is necessary for you to declare the truth. You are responsible for declaring the truth to your enemy, whoever the enemy might be. You cannot change your enemy, but you can be sure he or she understands the right facts. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Hard Facts to Face about Revenge

From his observation of this interaction between David and Saul, Pastor Chuck Swindoll wisely observed three steps that lead to revenge:

1. *Injury*: One person harms another.
2. *Vulnerability*: The victim later finds the perpetrator open to harm.
3. *Depravity*: The sinful nature of the victim leads him or her to seek revenge.

How do you see these three features represented in this account of David's encounter with Saul? Which feature is absent in this narrative? What does this absence reveal about David? How is David's example instructive for followers of Jesus Christ today?



Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24

There's no such thing as a small step on the road to temptation or on the pathway to revenge and retaliation. Even a small step in that direction is a wrong step.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Reread the exchange between David and Saul in [1 Samuel 24:12–21](#). What timeless truths do their words reveal about revenge?

Even though Saul had committed innumerable evils, David did not yield to the subtle temptation of revenge. Instead of thrusting the knife into Saul's back, David opened his hands and trusted that God would judge Saul. In doing so, David demonstrated a truth that the apostle Paul would later teach: "Vengeance belongs to the Lord."



Correlation: Vengeance Belongs to the Lord

The narratives of the Old Testament powerfully shape readers because they actively demonstrate the truth about God. Some truths, however, are so important that the biblical authors articulate and expand them again . . . and again. [Romans 12:17–21](#) contains a succinct yet profound discussion about revenge.

What is the apostle Paul's fundamental command concerning revenge in [12:17](#)?



Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24

According to [Romans 12:19](#), to whom does vengeance ultimately belong? (Note: this is a quotation of [Deuteronomy 32:35](#).) How does this principle relate to Paul's command that opened this passage?

According to [Romans 12:20–21](#), how should followers of Jesus treat their enemies?

What a radical paradigm shift! Paul called Christians to do more than just resist seeking revenge against those who harm them. Instead, he took it a step further and urged followers of Jesus to love and serve their enemies. This is easy to read but hard to practice in the struggles of day-to-day life. Thankfully, Pastor Chuck shares some wisdom on how to apply these truths today.



Application: Tough Principles to Practice against Revenge

Drawing from the well of David's example, Pastor Chuck offers the water of biblical application about revenge that truly is life-giving.

- *Because man is depraved, expect to be mistreated.*
- *Because mistreatment is inevitable, anticipate feelings of revenge.*
- *Because the desire for revenge is predictable, refuse to fight in the flesh.*



Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24

In what ways does your current cultural climate encourage people to give in to the subtle temptation of revenge?

Is there someone in your life who has hurt you so deeply that you still carry the wounds? How have you dealt with the pain? Have you ever collapsed due to the pain and given in to the temptation of revenge?

What would it look like for you to confront your offender with the truth—not to harm him or her but to take the first step of forgiveness?

Many people who have been deeply hurt by others can hear revenge singing its sweet song in the background of their lives. Revenge simply waits for its melody to strike a chord in a sinful heart—leading a hurt person to hurt another. You may feel the tones of this song growing louder, but David's example shouts a reminder of a comforting truth . . . *vengeance belongs to the Lord*.



Life's Most Subtle Temptation

1 Samuel 24



A FINAL PRAYER

As you close this study, think of one person against whom you feel the subtle temptation to take revenge. Then sincerely offer this prayer to God as you walk toward renewal.

Father, I confess to You that I am resentful toward:

for:

Just as Jesus died for me and released me from the guilt of my sins, I want You to heal me of this poisonous grudge so I can live in the freedom of Christ's love. Help me. Free me of this bondage and keep me from it for the rest of my life. I claim God's power through Jesus Christ my Lord. In His gracious name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



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DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY NINE

What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25

Is it any wonder God chose David as a man after His own heart? What a teachable spirit! He was willing to change. May God forever keep us flexible and teachable. Someone has a word in season for a blind spot in our lives, and we're nothing more than dummies if we ignore him or her.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

SLEEPING in the heart of every person is a lion named *anger*. It isn't always easily wakened, but once it is stirred, it prepares to pounce. Often, it claws at its victims in subtle ways—through cold shoulders, passive-aggressive comments, or feelings of bitterness. Occasionally, however, anger emerges with a roar of fury, leading a person to commit acts of horrific violence.

These behaviors don't seem to befit a follower of God. Yet, many Christians let the angry lion loose from time to time. Even David, a man after God's own heart, lost control and found himself prowling and ready to strike.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study looks at a conflict that awoke David's anger, and it will show how God graciously intervened to send the lion back to its den. While anger lives in every heart, God provides a way to soothe that beast into a deep, deep sleep.



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What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25



PREPARE YOUR HEART

One can easily feel trapped in the circumstances of life and bound by the emotions these circumstances produce, such as anger, fear, shame, and guilt. As you prepare to search the Scriptures today, pray the words of [Psalm 40:1–3](#), and ask God to release you from these chains.

*I waited patiently for the LORD to help me,
and he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the pit of despair,
out of the mud and the mire.
He set my feet on solid ground
and steadied me as I walked along.
He has given me a new song to sing,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see what he has done and be amazed.
They will put their trust in the LORD.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

After David spared Saul's life in the cave at En-gedi, Saul, in a rare moment of humility, told David, "You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil" ([1 Samuel 24:17](#)). Then Saul called off his ruthless pursuit of David . . . for a while, anyway.

Leaving En-gedi, David and his men moved to the Judean mountains to try to carve out a new life in the wilderness. Look up [Maon](#) at [bibleatlas.org](#). Trace David's route from En-gedi to Maon. What do you observe about this region?



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25

Not much time passed before another person named Nabal offended David. How did David respond this time? Did he extend mercy to Nabal as he did to Saul? Or did David's anger overcome him? Open your Bible and turn to 1 Samuel 25 to find out!



Observation: Three Main Characters

When Pastor Chuck Swindoll studies a biblical passage, he always keeps his detective's eye looking for three things: people, events, and timeless truths.¹ Today's passage contains all three! As you observe [1 Samuel 25](#), however, pay special attention to the major *people*, taking note of what they did and how the author described them.

Nabal—1 Samuel 25:2–13

Read [1 Samuel 25:2–3](#). In the space below, write down a description of Nabal. What words do these verses use to describe him?

Reciprocation is a common practice today. For example, if a friend offers you a gift on your birthday, the unspoken expectation is that you would *reciprocate* and offer your friend a gift on his or her birthday. In many ancient cultures, however, reciprocation stood as a central pillar of social structures. Relationships often lived or died through reciprocation alone.

According to [25:7–8](#), what did David point out to Nabal? How did David expect Nabal to reciprocate?



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25

How did Nabal react in *1 Samuel 25:10–11* to David's request? What did David say in *25:13* when he heard Nabal's reaction?

Abigail—1 Samuel 25:14–31

As the temperature of the conflict between David and Nabal rose, the only one who could cool off the tension was Nabal's wife Abigail. According to *1 Samuel 25:18–19*, how did Abigail respond when she heard about their conflict?

According to *25:28–31*, why did Abigail treat David the way she did? What did she recognize about David that Nabal neglected?



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25

David—1 Samuel 25:32–44

In your own words, summarize David’s words to Abigail in [1 Samuel 25:32–35](#). Was Abigail successful in what she set out to do?

While David previously had “repaid [Saul] good for evil” ([24:17](#)), Nabal was now repaying David “evil for good” ([25:21](#)). Thanks to Abigail, David showed restraint and did not seek vengeance against Nabal. Just as he did with Saul, David trusted God, and God judged Nabal for his actions.



Interpretation: Three Natural Conflicts

The three main characters in 1 Samuel 25 each provide an example for how the people of God should—or should *not*—act. More than this, however, interpretation of this passage will uncover hidden gems of theological truth about natural conflicts that will inevitably occur in life.

Between Husband and Wife

In what ways was Abigail different from her husband? What kinds of characteristics did Abigail show by bringing food and supplies to David without Nabal knowing ([1 Samuel 25:19](#))? How did David describe these acts in [25:32–35](#)? For more insight into Abigail’s character, check out [Constable’s Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#).



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25

Here's the practical side of wisdom. Abigail knew exactly what approach she would take when she encountered David. Three things stand out: her tact, her faith, her loyalty.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Between Employer and Employee

According to [1 Samuel 25:25](#), what is the meaning of the name “Nabal”? In this narrative, how did Nabal live up to his name in his dealings with David?

Between Anger and Murder

How did David initially react to Nabal’s poor treatment of him? How did David’s treatment of Saul differ? (Compare [1 Samuel 24:12–15](#) and [25:12–13](#).) Why do you think David’s two responses differed so drastically?

Often, when we are faced with a crisis, the standard, garden-variety answer is to sort of tuck our tail between our legs and run. But there is a better way. God says, “There’s a reason for this. And I’m willing to do creative things through you to put you back on your feet.” It will take creativity, it will take determination, it will take constant eyes on the Lord. But when He pulls it off, it’s marvelous. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25



Correlation: Jesus on Anger

David felt so angry toward Nabal that he was ready to draw his sword and spill Nabal's blood. It almost feels as if Jesus had this very moment in mind when he addressed the topic of anger in His Sermon on the Mount.

Read [Matthew 5:21–26](#). Which of the ten commandments did Jesus discuss in this passage? What connection did Jesus make between this commandment and a person's feeling of anger?

What alternative did Jesus offer those who struggle with feelings of murderous anger?

Jesus was teaching His followers to stop sin before it starts by dealing with it in the heart. That's how Abigail stopped David from murdering Nabal. She appealed to David's heart by casting a vision of how God would make him "leader of Israel," and she warned him not to "blemish" his good name with needless bloodshed ([1 Samuel 25:30–31](#)).



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25



Application: Supernatural Solutions to Natural Conflicts

Both Nabal and David acted in a less-than-godly way in this account. Both showed a great deal of anger toward the other. Combating anger sometimes feels like bailing water in a violent storm. Just as you toss a bucket of water over one side of the boat, a swell washes over the other side. Have you ever been surprised by a wave of your own anger? What caused it?

Unlike David and Nabal, Abigail showed the faith, tact, and wisdom of a true follower of God. From her example, Pastor Chuck developed two application principles:

First, *whenever conflicts arise . . . be wise!* Look at the big picture of the circumstances, at both sides of the conflict. Don't be hasty. Pray, and ask God for wisdom before you act.

What conflict are you facing today? It may be a marital conflict, or you could be dealing with a difficult situation at work. It is possible that your conflict is not *external* but *internal*—a conflict of conscience. Practically speaking, how can you be wise as you work through this conflict? How can you emulate the wisdom Abigail showed?



What to Feed an Angry Man

1 Samuel 25

Second, *whenever you realize there's nothing you can do . . . wait!* God allows impasses in order to stop you so you can wait on Him to work out His plan.

Waiting on God requires trusting Him, His plan, and His perfect timing. This never is easy. In the space below, write down a prayer, asking God to increase your faith as you wait for Him to work out your conflict.

When the lion of David's anger took control of his heart, he entered a heated conflict with Nabal. And when David lacked the wisdom to resolve the dispute, God sent Abigail to cool the anger of both men. And He will send you your Abigail, too. You only need to be wise and wait.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I know I get angry sometimes, and I know that I have contributed to many conflicts throughout my life. Please, forgive me of these things today. I ask You to work in me to replace feelings of unrighteous anger with the fruit of the Spirit like peace, patience, kindness, and self-control. Help me show these characteristics to all, especially to those with whom I am in conflict. Help me to be wise as I wait on Your perfect timing. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



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DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TEN

Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6

The timeless truth woven all the way through this passage is that dark days call for right thinking and a vertical focus. The storms of life aren't designed to throw us on our backs but to bring us to our knees.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

Do you ever feel like you're adrift at sea . . . with no sense of direction and no idea how to find the refuge of dry land? Does it ever feel like life is hitting you with wave after wave of disappointment, disillusionment, and distress?

You may look around and wonder, *How did I even get here?* Many times, people find themselves caught in the stormy seas by no act of their own. There is nothing morally or spiritually wrong if someone feels this way. Humans can't control the storm!

Occasionally, however, a person will actively put his or her own boat into the choppy waters by making a poor decision in a moment of folly and frail faith.

The ship of King David's life faced both high tides and low tides, both stormy seas and calm waters. Yet, in one grim season, David looked up to see the cloudy skies fade into the blackness of night. David felt hopeless and found himself drowning in a whirlpool of despair. And he was there because of the bad choices *he himself* had made.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will join David at one of his darkest moments to see how God was working even in the darkness of David's sin to bring him into the light. Perhaps, by pointing to David's example, God wants to lead you through the storm into the dawn as well.



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Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Scripture records no psalms of David from this tumultuous time. But David still wrote many psalms *after* this season, and he likely looked back to these difficult times as inspiration for some of his psalms about God's faithfulness. Pray in faith the words of [Psalm 30:1–5](#), and look ahead to the hope God offers, even if everything feels totally hopeless right now.

*I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me.
You refused to let my enemies triumph over me.
O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
and you restored my health.
You brought me up from the grave, O LORD.
You kept me from falling into the pit of death.
Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones!
Praise his holy name.
For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime!
Weeping may last through the night,
but joy comes with the morning.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Just when he thought he was free from Saul's relentless pursuit, David heard news that Saul and 3,000 of Israel's best soldiers were on the hunt once again. One night, David sneaked into Saul's camp. Finding Saul asleep, a soldier offered to kill Saul for David. How did David respond to this offer in [1 Samuel 26:9–11](#)?



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6

When David finally confronted Saul, the king humbly confessed, “I have sinned. Come back home, my son, and I will no longer try to harm you, for you valued my life today. I have been a fool and very, very wrong” (1 Samuel 26:21). Turn now to 1 Samuel 27 to see what David did after Saul and his army went home, leaving David no closer to the throne than before.



Observation: Clouds and Darkness Come

The story preserved in 1 Samuel 27 may strike you as strange or confusing, but before you reach for any Bible study resources, read through the chapter a few times using several translations. Make sure you really understand what the passage *says* before you consider what it *means*.¹

In your own words, summarize what David thought to himself in 27:1. What was David’s problem? What did he consider to be the solution? What stands out to you about David’s response in light of the events of the preceding chapter?

When Saul heard in 27:4 that David went to Gath, he stopped his pursuit. Why did Saul stop, even though he had been chasing David relentlessly for so long? What irony do you see in David’s choice of refuge? (Hint: See 17:4 to remember who was from Gath.)



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6

When David lived in the land of the Philistines, he and his men did some questionable things. Realizing that King Achish would not approve of David’s actions, he carefully bent the truth to win the king’s approval. Read [1 Samuel 27:8–10](#), and using the chart below, compare what David *actually* did with what he *told* Achish he did.

	What David <i>actually</i> did (27:8)	What he <i>told</i> Achish (27:10)
Whom he fought		
Where he fought		

According to [27:9](#), what was the result of David’s battles with the people he actually fought? According to [27:11–12](#), why did David do these things?

When David was a boy, God promised to make him king. With the passing of time, though, this promise faded from David’s focus. Instead, he operated with:

- A humanistic viewpoint—“David kept thinking to himself” ([27:1](#))
- Pessimistic reasoning—“Saul is going to get me” ([27:1](#))
- Rationalistic logic—“The best thing I can do is escape to the Philistines” ([27:1](#))



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6

These distractions led David to turn inward, away from God, to find solutions to his problems rather than trusting that God would do what He promised.



Interpretation: Winds and Storms Increase

Interpretation builds upon the foundation of observation and develops timeless truths based on David's example that the people of God can use in their journey of faith.

In what ways did David show a lack of faith in God in [1 Samuel 27](#)? What were the consequences of David's actions, and who, other than David, did these consequences affect?

To preserve his own life, David compromised his allegiance to his own people and joined the cause of God's enemies. In what ways did David show duplicity, vagueness, and secrecy to yield to the desires of both the Israelites and the Philistines in [27:8–12](#)? Why was this problematic? [Constable's Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#) provides a detailed discussion of these verses.

We don't hear much about the carnal Christian, do we? Not much is said about the believer who chooses to disobey God and operate in the flesh. David, at this point in his life, is a clear illustration of a man who is a believer on the inside, but on the outside, he looks just like a nonbeliever because of the way he's living his life. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6



Correlation: Finding Joy in the Darkness

About 1,000 years after the life of David, James (Jesus' own half-brother) wrote to a group of believers facing cloudy days and dark nights. They were scattered from their homes, their friends, and their families, and they were facing persecution for their faith in Jesus. James wrote to comfort them during a stormy season.

Read [James 1:2–4](#). According to this passage, what attitude are followers of Jesus to have when they face trouble?

Why did James encourage his readers to adopt this disposition?

The Greek word translated as “troubles” or “trials” can also be translated as “temptations.” How would this translation affect the way you understand the passage? How would David have benefited from believing this truth recorded by James?



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6

Contrary to the suggestion of James, David did not use his season of darkness to grow. He chose, instead, to fill his sail with his own sinful actions and move deeper into the storm. These choices ultimately harmed David, and his behavior serves as a warning to those facing cloudy days or dark nights today.



Application: Learning from David's Injury and Devastation

With each sinful action, David's life moved deeper into the darkness—like he was descending step by step into a pit. David experienced four feelings, each progressively worsened until he landed at the lowest point in his life.

1. *Displacement*: Although David tried to prove himself to the Philistines, they saw through his deception and removed him from his position under King Achish (1 Samuel 29:1–7).
2. *Disillusionment*: Once David lost the protection of Achish and the Philistine army, he had no protection from Saul's attacks (29:8–11).
3. *Depression*: When David returned to Ziklag, the land King Achish had given him, he found it in ruins and the women and children kidnapped. David, and his men wept “until they could weep no more” (30:1–4).
4. *Distrust*: The men David served and trained—the men who had faithfully followed him—lost their families, their home, and their safety . . . and they blamed David (30:5–6).

Have you felt any of these emotions lately?



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6

Reflect on your recent choices. In a moment of fear or anxiety, did you make any sinful decisions? Maybe you, like David, took refuge with “Philistines” and rationalized actions you knew were wrong. What would it look like for you to repent and turn away from these choices?

Pastor Chuck offers a timeless principle for those caught in the storms of life: *Cloudy days and dark nights call for right thinking and vertical focus.*

Are you in a stormy season right now? God doesn’t promise to miraculously cause the sun to rise and burn away the clouds. But He will remain faithful to His people and to His promises. How can you practically embrace right thinking and a vertical focus on God?

David began this journey by looking inward for a solution to his problem (27:1). But after driving himself deeper into the storm, David realized that he needed God to guide him to safety. When things couldn’t seem darker for David—when he was at his lowest point—he looked up and found “strength in the LORD his God” (30:6).

You may feel like you can’t gather enough strength to weather the storm for the rest of the dark night, but you don’t have to. God will be your strength, and He will bring you safely to shore.



Cloudy Days . . . Dark Nights

1 Samuel 27:1–30:6



A FINAL PRAYER

Whether you are experiencing sunny days and clear skies or cloudy skies and dark nights, offer your own concluding prayer to God. Ask Him to give you the strength to carry you through life, both today and in the future.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY ELEVEN

Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

“I have played the fool.” How aptly that describes the life of Saul. “I had God on my side, yet I lived as though He did not exist. The people of Israel chose me to lead them. But they didn’t know the inside of me. I have played the fool.”

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THIS series has focused on the life of David. But you cannot tell the story of David’s rise to royalty without also telling the story of his nemesis, King Saul, and his fall from power.

In a word, Saul’s life was *tragic*. The Israelites chose Saul as their king because he was taller, stronger, and more handsome than any other man in Israel. They built him up as their hero. Yet Saul’s hard heart was brittle, and the weight of the kingdom was too great to bear. Being pressed between crown and throne, he slowly crumbled to nothing. Out of the debris of Saul’s reign arose the next king—David, the young shepherd.

The stories of Saul and David present a fascinating study in contrast. Where Saul was impressive and proud, David was modest and humble. Where Saul was physically strong, David was spiritually strong. Where Saul trusted himself, David trusted God. These contrasts make a key point: David was God’s choice for the king of Israel.

While Saul’s *life* contrasts with King David’s, his *death* contrasts with another King’s. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will examine these two deaths to see how followers of God can find hope through the story of Saul’s otherwise hopeless life.



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Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before you wade into the waters of God's Word, use the words of [Psalm 55:22–23](#) to ready your heart for what God has prepared for you:

*Give your burdens to the LORD,
and he will take care of you.
He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.
But you, O God, will send the wicked
down to the pit of destruction.
Murderers and liars will die young,
but I am trusting you to save me.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Saul seemed to have it all. He was the king. The people loved him. He was winning battles. But his proud heart was far from God, so his days of glory were numbered. As soon as David arrived in Saul's court, Saul's sense of control over his circumstances faltered. The enemy Philistines were attacking Israel, and he suspected it wouldn't be long before David took the throne.

In a moment of desperation, Saul abandoned the camp to find help. In Endor, he turned—not to a priest or a prophet of God—but to a pagan medium. Saul wanted to talk with Samuel, the prophet who had died years earlier. And the medium summoned his spirit from the dead.

According to [1 Samuel 28:16–19](#), what did the spirit of Samuel say to Saul? What did this spirit say would happen to Saul in the coming days?



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

The tough words of Samuel's spirit came true, and 1 Samuel 31 records these events. Turn there now, and see how Saul's life finally came to its tragic end.



Observation: Saul's Tragic End

Observation, the first step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method, requires asking, "What does the text say?"¹ Read [1 Samuel 31](#), and as you read, take note of how the warnings from Samuel came true.

Saul's Demise—1 Samuel 31:1–6

Just as Saul feared, the attacks of the Philistines on Israel only grew more severe. According to [1 Samuel 31:2–3](#), what did Israel's enemies do to Saul's sons? What did they do to Saul?

What did Saul ask his armor-bearer to do in [31:4](#) in response to the attack of the Philistines? What did Saul finally do when his servant denied his request?



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

The Philistines' Response—1 Samuel 31:7–13

According to [1 Samuel 31:9–10](#), what did the Philistines do when they found Saul and his sons' bodies?

According to [31:12–13](#), how did the people of Jabesh-gilead respond when they discovered what the Philistines had done to Saul?

Saul, the man who once knew the joys and blessings of the kingdom, the man who was the representative of God, the man who cared so much about his own image, is now dead. This man need never have died like this. But the truth of the matter is he chose this path. He chose inch by inch, day by day to compromise and to live in the light of disobedience. What a horrible, tragic scene. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Saul's Shameful Choice

To understand the meaning of the end of Saul's life, it is important for students of Scripture to place themselves in the sandals of the characters in each scene. Crossing the bridge from the modern world to the ancient world is no simple task, but thankfully, a good set of [Bible study tools](#) can help guide someone on a journey back thousands of years.



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

The cultural norms of ancient Near Eastern societies were determined based on values known as *shame* and *honor*. Read about these terms in a Bible dictionary. Briefly summarize what *shame* and *honor* are, and explain the role they played in ancient Israel.

Based on this historical background, why would Saul choose to take his own life rather than allow his enemies to kill him?

What warnings can followers of Jesus today learn from Saul's tragic example?

Saul did not want to suffer the final indignity of having the hated Philistines make sport of his body or mock him in death. Isn't it interesting, he's very concerned about his image with the enemy but shows little concern for his relationship with God whom he is about to meet? That happens when disobedience has dulled our senses. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31



Correlation: Christ's Triumphant Sacrifice

The death of King Saul creates a compelling contrast with the death of King Jesus. Before examining this contrast, though, turn to [Romans 6:1–14](#) to see what Christ's death accomplished for those who place their trust in Him.

According to [6:1–4](#), what is a Christ-follower's new response to sin?

According to [6:5–11](#), how does Christ create this new response to sin for those who trust in Him?

According to [6:12–14](#), what freedom does this new relationship with Jesus give His followers?



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

Here's the good news: we who know the Lord Jesus Christ carry within ourselves a renewed soul and spirit—that part of us which He took control of the moment we became Christians. He has taken up His residence there and has given us a new nature. Though our outer shell hurts and groans and is dying, our inner person is alive and vital, awaiting its home with the Lord. Being with the Lord occurs the moment—yes, the very moment—we die.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Everyone's Inevitable Fate

Pastor Chuck Swindoll developed his application of 1 Samuel 31 by contrasting Saul's death with the death of Jesus Christ. At first glance, their circumstances seem totally disparate, but the similarities are striking. Take a few moments to review the following chart.

Saul's Death	Christ's Death
Appeared to be the end of all <i>national</i> hope for <i>Israel</i>	Appeared to be the end of all <i>spiritual</i> hope for <i>humanity</i>
Suggested that <i>the Philistines</i> had won the final victory	Suggested that <i>Satan</i> had won the final victory
Paved the way for an entirely new plan of operation—the era of the <i>Davidic dynasty</i>	Paved the way for an entirely new plan of operation—the era of the <i>Holy Spirit</i>
Opened the throne room of <i>Israel</i> to <i>David</i> , once a modest shepherd	Opened the throne room of <i>God</i> to <i>sinners</i> who place their trust in Him
Ended an era of dissatisfaction and failure—from <i>Saul's reign</i> to <i>David's reign</i>	Ended an era of dissatisfaction and failure—from <i>the law's reign</i> to <i>grace's reign</i>
Displayed the foolishness of <i>man</i> —from <i>Saul's perspective</i>	Displayed the foolishness of <i>God</i> —from a <i>human perspective</i>



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

Which truth from this chart stands out to you most? Which do you most need a reminder of? How do these truths encourage you in your walk with God today?

How have you been ruling your life lately? As an independent, self-directed monarchy, like Saul? Or as a theocracy with God as the head, like David?

What personal lessons have you learned from witnessing Saul's tragic fall? What action steps can you take to make your life resemble David's faith more than Saul's pride?



Two Deaths . . . A Study in Contrast

1 Samuel 31

Saul's life truly was a tragedy. His life shined with promise and hope, but his reputation was tarnished because he did not have a heart for God. Saul's story acts as a warning for the people of God across time, and his life raises a singular question: Will you trust yourself or trust God? Saul ultimately placed his faith in himself, which led to his demise.

Today, many struggle with feelings of deep depression and have suicidal thoughts. If you or someone you know is reaching that point of desperation, please know that caring people are eager to help. The 24/7 phone number for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is 800-273-8255. Also, Insight for Living Ministries offers a variety of resources on the topics of [encouragement](#) and [healing](#).



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Your own Son to live the perfect life I could not live and to die the death I deserve. I ask You to strengthen me to go about my days believing that I am dead to sin and alive to God. Help me remember Saul's example during those times when I begin to look to myself for strength, rather than You. I pray these things in Jesus' strong name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWELVE

New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

I warn you, as you vicariously enter into the life of David, to be careful because with power comes those unique kinds of temptations that very few can handle. The hand of God was great with David. But he was still a man. And he could still be given to failure. And indeed he did.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

AN old woodsman proverb says, “A tree is best measured when it’s down.” When a tree is standing, even the best lumberjack will struggle to determine the tree’s height, to evaluate the wood’s quality, and to appraise the timber’s value. Likewise, a person’s character is best measured after his or her death through mature evaluation and reflection.

Though David died long ago, his life proves very instructive for those traveling on faith’s journey. Early on, David rooted his life in God and grew to be a hero whom all Israel looked up to. Yet he didn’t stand forever. When the winds of temptation and selfish desire grew too strong for David to withstand, he gradually gave in to sin, causing him to splinter and finally crack.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at David during the height of his success as well as at the beginning of his fall to uncover *why* he ultimately fell and *how* the people of God today can avoid making the same mistakes.



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New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures



PREPARE YOUR HEART

To prepare your heart to plunge into the depths of God's Word, pray the words of *Psalms 63:1–4*.

O God, you are my God;
I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you;
my whole body longs for you
in this parched and weary land
where there is no water.
I have seen you in your sanctuary
and gazed upon your power and glory.
Your unfailing love is better than life itself;
how I praise you!
I will praise you as long as I live,
lifting up my hands to you in prayer.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The drama of David's life unfolded in two acts. The first act, preserved in the book of 1 Samuel, tells of David's rise from a modest shepherd to a national hero, then from a wanted fugitive to Israel's new king.

At the beginning of 2 Samuel, David's life had reached its pinnacle. Yet not much time passed before David became entangled in his own sinful desires. His success turned to failure as he slid down a spiritual decline, which persisted until he died.

Before you turn to the first chapters of 2 Samuel, review Pastor Chuck Swindoll's chart on the entire book below.



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

SECOND SAMUEL					
David's Triumphs		David's Troubles			Appendix
Reigning in Hebron over Judea	Reigning in Jerusalem over all Israel	With himself	With his family	With his nation	Miscellaneous narratives
David's lament (1) David's crowning (2) David's increase (3–4)	A new capital (5) A new worship center (6) A new dynasty (7) A new boundary (8) A new son (9) Another new boundary (10)	David's sin (11) Nathan's denunciation (12)	Amnon's immorality (13) Absalom's crime and flight (14) Absalom's revolt (15) Absalom's counselors (16–17) Absalom's death (18)	David's return (19) Sheba's revolt (20)	A famine (21) A song (22) A prophecy (23) A failure (24)
CHAPTERS 1–4	CHAPTERS 5–10	CHAPTERS 11–12	CHAPTERS 13–18	CHAPTERS 19–20	CHAPTERS 21–24
Theme	Blessings or consequences follow every action.				
Key Verses	7:12–13				
Christ in 2 Samuel	Foreshadowed in David's reign, which, though imperfect, is characterized by justice, wisdom, and integrity; the Messiah, the Son of David, is promised as an offspring of the Davidic line and One who will sit upon David's throne forever.				

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Observation: The Beginning of David's Decline

If you have time, carefully read all of [2 Samuel 1–5](#), and keep track of one or two key observations from each chapter.¹ Otherwise, you can use the questions below like stepping stones to hop your way through these chapters.

What news did David receive in [1:4–6](#)?



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

With Saul and his sons dead, the people of Israel were uncertain about who would be the successor to the king. This created some controversy regarding who had the right to the throne. Many, especially those living in the northern regions of Israel, wanted Saul's son Ishbosheth to be king. Others, living in the southern regions of Judah, followed David instead (2 Samuel 2:8–11; 3:1).

According to 2:1, where did David go after hearing news about Saul? Did he settle down in the south or move up to the north where Saul had previously lived? Using your Bible *atlas*, look at the geography of Israel in the early years of the kingdom to map out these key locations.

While the conflict between David and Ishbosheth escalated, David's house grew along with his influence. What were the names of the children born to David's respective wives? Read 3:2–5, and fill in the spaces below.

Ahinoam from Jezreel (3:2): _____

Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel (3:3): _____

Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur (3:3): _____

Haggith (3:4): _____

Abitai (3:4): _____

Eglah (3:5): _____



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

After seven-and-a-half years of conflict, two of Ishbosheth's *own men* murdered him while he was taking an afternoon nap (2 [Samuel 4:5–7](#)). David was horrified by the dishonorable actions of these two men, but he recognized that they had cleared a direct path to the throne (4:8–12).

According to [5:4–5](#), where did David live out the remainder of his reign after the death of Ishbosheth?

David expanded the boundaries of Israel from 6,000 to 60,000 square miles. He set up extensive trade routes that reached the known world. He unified the nation under Jehovah God. He put down the idol altars. He created a national interest in spiritual things. He was a remarkable man. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: David Rises and Falls

The book of 2 Samuel urges its readers to wrestle with an important question: How did David fall from being such a great hero of faith? This question will guide our interpretation of the first chapters of 2 Samuel.

Why was it significant that David moved his royal residence from Hebron to Jerusalem in 2 [Samuel 5:6–15](#)? (Hint: 1 [Samuel 27:10](#) says that David spent much of his time running from Saul in the Negev, the southern portion of Israel.)



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

David didn't lose his heart for God overnight. Rather, with each unfaithful decision—small as they may have seemed to David—he gradually acted more like selfish-Saul than the faithful shepherd-boy Samuel had anointed years earlier.

We're often better at handling affliction than we are at handling promotions.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The narrative explains the beginning of this decline in [2 Samuel 3:2–6](#) and [5:14–15](#) by focusing on David's many marriages. Why was it problematic that David accumulated multiple wives? For help answering this question, see [Deuteronomy 17:14–20](#), the God-given job description for Israel's king.

David's sin looked like a cascade of falling dominoes—one bad decision leading to many others. Later, his insatiable lust for Bathsheba drove him to do horrible things ([2 Samuel 11:1–27](#)). And his children followed his sinful example too. One son, Absalom, staged a coup against his father ([15:1–12](#)), and another son, Amnon, raped his own sister ([13:1–19](#)).



Correlation: A Leader Who Serves

Even though his heart was gradually drifting from God, David had an important realization after the construction of the palace in Jerusalem: “The LORD had confirmed him as king over Israel and had blessed his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel” ([2 Samuel 5:12](#)). God placed David on Israel's greatest seat of power—not for his *own* benefit but for the benefit of *others*.



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

When He predicted His own death in [Matthew 20:17–28](#), King Jesus warned His disciples about adopting self-serving attitudes. According to Jesus in [20:25](#), how do the rulers of the world use their power and authority?

How are citizens of the kingdom of heaven to act *differently* than the rulers of the world, according to [20:26–28](#)? Who modeled this behavior perfectly? How?

In what ways did David act more like a worldly ruler rather than a true follower of God?

As David increased his fame, wealth, and power, he didn't use these gifts to serve God and Israel. He used them for his own glory. While few today have the kind of influence David had, many will face the same temptations David did.



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures



Application: Preventing Decline before It Begins

At different points in David's decline, he fell prey to four particularly insidious temptations: silver, sloth, sex, and self. Which of these four temptations do you tend toward? How have you been able to resist its attacks in the past?

To help you fight these temptations, Pastor Chuck Swindoll offers two timeless principles for you to remember and act upon.

First, *no personal pursuit is more important than cultivating godliness in your family*. Yes, David built a kingdom. But he neglected to build a godly family. Which is more important? What practical steps can you take today to cultivate godliness in your own family?



New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

Second, *no character trait needs more attention than genuine integrity*. A small slip in David's integrity created a landslide of sin that trapped David far from God for years. You may feel like David, caught in a cycle of sin. But God always provides His children with a way out (*1 Corinthians 10:13*). In the space below, write a prayer of confession and repentance.

Sadly, David's spiritual fall was a long, drawn-out process, and the sins he committed grew gradually more egregious. David's example is a warning that a small slip in integrity can lead anyone down a wrong path away from God. **Take heed!**



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for holding fast to me even when I feel my heart drifting from You. I ask You to produce in me godly integrity so I might lead a life of faithful service to You. I pray these things in Jesus' faithful name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY THIRTEEN

David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6

When God gives specific instructions for doing His will, He wants it done exactly that way, doesn't He? When we begin to care about the things God cares about, we're on our way to real freedom and real happiness.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

A key idea threads through this series on David: *he was a man after God's own heart* (1 Samuel 13:14). David's life gives glimpses into what it means to be a person after God's heart . . . and what it doesn't mean.

When you think about David, you likely think of a few iconic images. The shepherd boy standing over the fallen giant Goliath. The sensitive man singing songs for his king, his people, his God. The seasoned warrior slaying "his ten thousands" (18:7). The revered king sitting upon the throne.

Yet bearing the soldier's sword, the musician's harp, or the ruler's scepter doesn't necessarily make someone godly. So what was it about David's heart that separated him from everyone else?

Simply put, *David loved and trusted God*. And this spiritual posture guided his steps.

Despite David's deep desire to follow God, he occasionally misstepped and fell off the path of righteousness. In 2 Samuel 6, the focus of this *Searching the Scriptures* study, David's example instructs how people after God's heart should respond when they find themselves straying from Him because of their careless neglect of His commands.



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David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6



PREPARE YOUR HEART

David's love for God gushes from his psalms like water from a geyser. Express your own love for God using the words of [Psalm 9:1–2](#) before you study His Word today:

*I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.
I will be filled with joy because of you.
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Before the time of David's reign, the hearts of the Israelites stood far from God. The hard-hearted people had their perfect leader in Saul, who had next to no love for God. When Saul was king, he had great interest in achieving military success—so much so that he completely ignored Israel's spiritual health.

Prior to Saul's reign, the enemy Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant ([1 Samuel 4:1–11](#)), but they later returned it to Israel because God had cursed them for taking the ark ([5:1–7:1](#)). According to [7:1](#), where did the ark stay after the Philistines returned it? (Make sure you find this spot on your Bible [atlas](#)!)

The ark was *essential* to Israel's spiritual life because the presence of God dwelled with it. Yet, Saul did not once seek out God's presence during his reign. When David took Saul's place, he refused to make the same mistake. Jump ahead now to 2 Samuel 6 to see how David corrected Saul's error.



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6



Observation: Celebrating the Presence of God

Every passage of Scripture contains truths that can lead to life change. However, a hasty reading often results in misunderstanding the text of the passage and its meaning.¹ Slowly read [2 Samuel 6](#) a few times using different Bible translations. As you read, place yourself in David's sandals and consider the motivation for his actions throughout the account.

In 2 Samuel 6, David had just been crowned king in Jerusalem. He then immediately traveled to Baalah of Judah. (This is another name for Kiriath-jearim, mentioned in [1 Samuel 7:1](#).) According to [2 Samuel 6:2](#), why did he go there?

According to [6:3](#), how did David try to transport the ark of the covenant from Abinadab's house back to Jerusalem?



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6

As David's men navigated the ark through the rocky terrain, the ark became unsteady and started to tip over. What happened to Uzzah when he tried to stop the ark from falling in [2 Samuel 6:6–7](#)?

How did David respond in [6:9–10](#) to what happened to Uzzah? What caused him to change his mind in [6:12](#)?

We've got David standing here mad at the Lord when, in fact, the Lord was angry at David. Well, I thought you said he was a man after God's heart? I did. Does that mean David was perfect? It does not. Having a heart for God doesn't mean you're perfect; it means you're sensitive. And when you see you're wrong, you face it. You own up to it. You come to terms with it. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to [6:5](#), [12–15](#), how did David and the rest of the people of Israel respond to the ark's presence in Jerusalem?



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6

Why in the world did David get so excited? Because he was free. When you obey, you're free. When you disobey, you're in bondage. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How did Michal, David's wife and daughter of Saul, feel about David's behavior (2 Samuel 6:16, 20)?

Like father, like daughter! While David couldn't contain his heart's love for God, his wife filled her own heart with bitterness and contempt. But David didn't care! He said, "He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the LORD, so I celebrate before the LORD. Yes, and I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes!" (6:21–22). What a clear picture of true love for God!



Interpretation: Great Intentions, Tragic Results

First, read about the *ark of the covenant* using your Bible study tools. What was the ark? Why was it so essential to Israel's spiritual life? Record any other key findings in the space below.



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6

Read [Exodus 25:10–22](#). How does this passage clarify God’s choice to kill Uzzah in [2 Samuel 6:6–7](#)? Note that Uzzah was trying to do a good thing for God! Develop a timeless theological truth about following God’s commands.

What does the contrast between David’s response and Michal’s response to the presence of the ark in Jerusalem reveal about their hearts? What can followers of Jesus today learn from their example?

Who cares about little golden poles that go through little ringlets and go on shoulders rather than waists? God does. If He didn’t care, He wouldn’t have said it. If the Lord cared enough to write it and cared enough to preserve it, He cares enough about the details to have you pull it off His way. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Filling in the Gaps

At this point, you may *still* feel confused about some of the finer details of the 2 Samuel 6. This is where correlation is helpful. Pastor Chuck Swindoll says, “By comparing one Scripture with other Scriptures, precept upon precept and line upon line, the whole truth begins to emerge.”²



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6

Thankfully, 1 Chronicles 15 contains a parallel account of these events that helps clarify David's motivation. According to [15:11–15](#), what mistake did David make the *first* time he tried to bring the ark to Jerusalem? What did he do differently the *second* time?

What does this passage reveal about David's heart for God and His law?

In *principle*, David was following God by trying to reinstate the ark into Israel's spiritual life. In *precept*, however, he ignored God's commands for handling the ark, and he paid the price for his disobedience. Thankfully, God gives His people second chances. David learned from his error, repented, and brought the ark to Jerusalem in a manner pleasing to God.



Application: Freedom in Christ

This scene from David's life offers two points of application:

1. *The better you know where you stand with the Lord, the freer you can be.* When David repented from his sin and realized he had right standing with God, his heart overflowed with joy and he freely worshiped God without feeling shame.
2. *The freer you are before the Lord, the more confident you will become.* In contrast, Michal did not have a heart for God, so she lacked the kind of freedom David had. She couldn't navigate her life with the kind of confidence that comes only from God.



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6

Which of these two points prove most relevant in your life right now? How so?

Do you ever find yourself wanting to follow God in principle but not in precept? If so, in what ways? Is there a specific way right now the Holy Spirit is nudging you to address an issue or need?

The apostle Paul said, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (*Galatians 5:1* NIV). Because of God’s love, grace, and forgiveness, anyone can experience the kind of freedom David had and can lead a life that overflows with joy and confidence in Jesus Christ.



David and the Ark

2 Samuel 6



A FINAL PRAYER

To conclude your study today, reflect on this prayer by Pastor Chuck:

Father, I pray for those whose lives are marked by emptiness, sadness, and all the things that go with the consequences of sin. I pray You will lead them to a knowledge of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and give them no peace until Christ has invaded their lives. And for those who live their lives still bound up, though in Christ, may they come to know a grace and freedom that accompanies obedience. And may that grace and freedom mark our lives as Your followers. In the name of Christ, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 140.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY FOURTEEN

When God Says No

2 Samuel 7

You know what I've learned? When God says no, He has a better way. And He expects me to support it. My very best reaction is cooperation and humility.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

GOD answers prayer! Isn't that a powerful truth? Many spend weeks, months, and even years earnestly pleading with God on their knees about just one thing. Freedom from that addiction. Healing for that persistent sickness. Salvation for that lost family member who's far from God. When God finally says yes, joy supplants the burdens in the once-heavy heart.

Yet . . . because God answers prayer doesn't mean He'll *always* answer yes. In fact, God often says no—even to prayers offered by His most faithful followers, even to prayers offered in a posture of selfless service and pure humility, even to prayers that seem good for God's plan and God's people.

King David offered such a well-intentioned request to God shortly after taking the throne in Jerusalem. David wanted to build a temple, a house for God even grander than David's own palace.

But God said no.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study explores why God said no to David's honest, honoring, and heartfelt request. The lesson that David learned proves useful for Christ's followers today and provides a practical road map to follow when God says no to our requests.



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When God Says No

2 Samuel 7



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Prayer involves more than asking God to give good gifts. It's also an opportunity to give praise back to Him. Open your time of study by praying the words of [Psalm 103:1–5](#).

*Let all that I am praise the LORD;
with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.
Let all that I am praise the LORD;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from death
and crowns me with love and tender mercies.
He fills my life with good things.
My youth is renewed like the eagle's!*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

After donning the crown of Israel, David first returned the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Shouts and songs of praise engulfed the entire city with its arrival. Peace filled the land, the king loved God, and God's favor returned at last.

The city of David, however, had one glaring omission: a temple for God's presence. The ark still resided in the tabernacle—a tent made of fabric, poles, and ropes. David couldn't sit idly by in the palace with God's presence relegated to such a mundane home.



Observation: An Earnest Request Denied

Pastor Chuck Swindoll's study of the Bible is based on a thorough observation of the Scriptures. He always begins with the same question, "What does the passage say?"¹ Keep this question in mind as you read [2 Samuel 7](#).



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7

After he had firmly established his claim to the throne and settled into his palace, what did David say to the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:2? What did David's statements suggest he wanted to do?

It is during the interludes of life that we seize a dream, an ideal objective. But sometimes the dream is from God, and sometimes it's not. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll.

God began His response by asking a rhetorical question. While the answer to this question is unstated, the expected response should be evident based on the context. God employed this rhetorical device for emphasis—as if the answer were written in all capital letters. What question did God ask in 7:5, and what is the expected—though unstated—answer?

According to 7:6–7, why did God deny David's request?



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7

While God said no to David's request to build the temple, He said yes to something far more significant. According to [2 Samuel 7:10–11a](#), what did God promise to do for Israel?

In [7:10–11a](#), God promised *what* He planned to do for Israel, and in [7:11b–12](#), God explained *how* He would use David to carry out these plans. What role did God assign David in the fulfillment of this promise?

According to [7:12–13](#), who would build the temple for God?

Even though David was a man after God's own heart, God said no when David asked to build the temple. But God had bigger plans for David. God said, "Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever" ([7:16](#)). God denied David's request to build a house *for Him* because He wanted to build a house *for David*.



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7



Interpretation: Why God Said No

A careful reader of this account might ask, “Why?” Why did David want to build the temple? Why did God say no? Why did God choose to establish David’s royal line instead? The interpretation phase of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method will help uncover the answers to these difficult questions.

Turn to [2 Chronicles 6:7–9](#), which preserves King Solomon’s reflection on the time when his father David asked to build the temple. According to [6:8](#), what motivation did David have for making this request? How did God view David’s request?

God’s answer is not a question of sin. It is not His judgment. It is not coming upon David as a consequence of his wrongdoing. It is simply God redirecting His plan.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

[Second Samuel 7:18–29](#) records David’s response to God’s denial of his request to build the temple. What adjectives would you use to describe David’s attitude in his response? What can faithful followers of Jesus learn from David’s example when God says no to their requests?

It isn’t God’s plan that everybody builds a temple. You may have a great resolve, a great plan, a great ideal, but it may not be God’s plan. When you face that, it is tough to bear because you’re not dealing with sin. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7



Correlation: The Davidic Covenant

God's promise to David may seem like a consolation prize for not getting to build the temple, but it was a much more valuable honor. The covenant to establish David's dynasty played an essential role in defeating sin and restoring creation to its full glory.

In His original covenant with Abraham, God promised, "I will make you into a great nation. . . . All the families on earth will be blessed through you" ([Genesis 12:2–3](#)). Through Abraham, God established the nation of Israel, and later through David, God made Israel into a great nation. But how would God distribute His blessing and cure His creation? *Through David's heir.*

God told David: "I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever." ([2 Samuel 7:12–13](#)).

In the short-term, God fulfilled this promise to David through his son Solomon, who built a temple for God in Jerusalem. But Solomon proved imperfect, and he didn't reign forever because he was just a man. More than that, he proved he didn't deserve to reign forever because he didn't follow God faithfully.

But didn't God's covenant say that David's heir would reign forever? This seems like a contradiction, but it isn't. Biblical covenants often have both *near* and *far* fulfillments.

Nearly 1,000 years after Solomon, another descendent of David was born—an eternal king, sitting on an eternal throne, reigning over God's eternal people. According to [Luke 1:32–33](#), how did the angel who appeared to Mary describe the child she would later deliver? How do these words relate to the covenant God made with David?



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7

Read the priest Zechariah's prophecy about the birth of this new king in [Luke 1:67–75](#). How would this descendent of David right the world's wrongs caused by sin?

While King David offered Israel physical deliverance from its enemies, his descendent—King Jesus—offers the whole world deliverance from the true enemies: Satan, sin, and death. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are the answers to the prayer that's deep within every human heart—the prayer for hope, for salvation, for everlasting life, for eternal peace.



Application: When God Says No Today

How should a faithful Jesus-follower respond when God says no to an earnest prayer? Pastor Chuck offers three points of application to keep in mind:

1. When God says no, it isn't necessarily discipline or rejection. It might be redirection.
2. When God says no, He has a better way.
3. When God says no, the best reaction is cooperation and humility.

Has God said no to you recently? If so, record the situation and how you responded. What does it look like for you to walk in faith in response to this no?



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7

Has God ever denied a request in the past only to send you down a path you never would have expected? What did you learn from that experience? How might His no have been a disguised yes to something else?

What are you praying for right now? How can you prepare yourself to respond with cooperation and humility, whether the answer is yes or no?

You may have been praying about this one matter for a long time. Maybe you're feeling weary while waiting for an answer. But God *will* answer your prayer, and regardless of the answer, you can trust that He has magnificent plans in store for you, and He has paved a way for you that is better than anything you could imagine.



When God Says No

2 Samuel 7



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for all the times You've answered my prayers—even when the answer was no. Help me to become a person of fervent and faithful prayer. When You grant my requests, make me grateful and cause me to rejoice. When You deny them, work in me to trust You and to believe that a no to one thing is a yes to something better. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



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DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY FIFTEEN

Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9

David, the king, out of sheer love for Jonathan, demonstrated grace to the crippled man. So God, out of love for His Son, Jesus Christ, and the debt He paid, demonstrates grace to the believing sinner.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHAT comes to mind when you hear the word *grace*? A ballet dancer gliding across a stage? All the dignity and majesty that adorns royalty? A quick prayer you say before enjoying a delicious meal?

While each of these examples paints an accurate picture of grace, Scripture presents the concept in a much more dynamic way—one that is God-centered and self-giving. But too many people miss this rich, biblical definition of grace. And understanding this single word will change your life!

So, this *Searching the Scriptures* study will answer one simple question: *What is true, biblical grace?* Few events paint the picture more vividly than when King David showed amazing grace to a crippled nobody.



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Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9



PREPARE YOUR HEART

God's grace saturates every page of Scripture. It's grace everywhere you turn! Read [Psalm 36:5–9](#), and pray to God, thanking Him for His grace.

*Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your justice like the ocean depths.
You care for people and animals alike, O LORD.
How precious is your unfailing love, O God!
All humanity finds shelter
in the shadow of your wings.
You feed them from the abundance of your own house,
letting them drink from your river of delights.
For you are the fountain of life,
the light by which we see.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

David's journey from pasture to palace brought him down many difficult roads. Yet David always had close friends nearby to guide him along the right path—the path toward God. One such friend was Jonathan, King Saul's son. Even when Saul turned against David, Jonathan remained loyal to his friend because of his trust in God's plan.

Read [1 Samuel 20:14–17](#). In light of David and Jonathan's closeness, what request did Jonathan make to his dear friend should he become king? How did David respond?



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9

When one ancient dynasty overtook another, the new king customarily sought out and executed all the remaining family members of the previous king. If the old king had no surviving family members, then no one could question the legitimacy of the new king's right to the throne.

When David encountered one of Saul's descendants in 2 Samuel 9, would he follow this custom to protect himself? Or would he honor his word to Jonathan and Saul and extend grace?



Observation: The King and the Crippled Man

Scripture contains a wide variety of literary genres: narrative, poetry, prophecy, letters, and more! Each genre communicates God's truth in a unique way. Letters, for example, often directly *tell* the readers an essential truth and then move on to show how to apply that truth. In narrative, such as 2 Samuel 9, authors prefer to *show* God's truth in action.

But before a student of the Bible can determine and apply this truth, he or she must first determine what the passage says.¹ Read [2 Samuel 9](#), and briefly summarize the flow of events.

According to [9:1](#) and [9:3](#), why was David looking for a descendent of Saul? What did David intend to do when he found this descendent?



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9

I think it's worth noting that David asks, "Is there anyone?" He doesn't ask, "Is there anyone qualified?" Or "Is there anyone worthy?" He asks, "Regardless of who they are, is there anybody still living who ought to be the recipient of my grace?" Unqualified acceptance, unconditional love. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to Saul's old servant Ziba in [2 Samuel 9:3](#), which descendent of Saul still lived? How did Ziba describe him? Cross reference [4:4](#) to see what had happened to him.

Ziba explains in [9:4](#) that Mephibosheth was from Lo-debar. This locale sat nestled in the far northeastern reaches of Israel. Mephibosheth likely moved to this remote region when he discovered that his father and grandfather had died. It would only be a matter of time before David came for him, and from his perspective, it seemed like that time had finally come.

When Mephibosheth came face-to-face with the king who replaced his grandfather in [9:6](#), how did he react? (See also the beginning of [9:7](#).)



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9

What did David offer Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9:7–11?

Although Mephibosheth expected a sword to strike his neck, David's words of grace struck his heart. The once-ostracized crippled man had joined the table of the king!



Interpretation: Grace on Display

Scattered throughout the original Hebrew of this passage are interpretive breadcrumbs that modern translations have some difficulty communicating. However, with the help of [Bible study tools](#), anyone can follow the trail to a sound understanding of this passage's rich meaning.

The original audience of this passage would have paused when they read or heard the name Mephibosheth because it means “destroyer of shame.” The author's first mention of Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9:6 foreshadows what takes place next. What was shameful about Mephibosheth's position in life?

Another key Hebrew term used throughout this account is *hesed*, often translated as “kindness” in 9:1, 3, and 7. This is the same word Jonathan used in 1 Samuel 20:14–15 when he asked David to preserve his bloodline. The Old Testament authors used this term to describe God's grace, faithfulness, commitment to His promises, and loyal love for His people.



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9

In light of his previous interactions with Saul and Jonathan, what specifically did David do to reflect God's *hesed* to Mephibosheth in this account? How did these actions destroy Mephibosheth's shame?

How did Mephibosheth's disposition change after experiencing David's grace (2 Samuel 9:6–8)? What can followers of Jesus today learn from his example?

Grace isn't picky. Grace doesn't look for things that have been done that deserve love. Grace operates apart from the response or the ability of the individual. Grace is one-sided. It is God's giving Himself in full acceptance to someone who does not deserve it and can never earn it and will never be able to repay. And this is the beautiful story of David.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9



Correlation: Saved by Grace through Faith

The apostle Paul penned one of the most magnificent treatises on God's grace in his letter to the believers in Ephesus. Read [Ephesians 2:1–10](#), and as you read, write down the words or phrases that correlate with the presentation of *hesed* in 2 Samuel 9?

Summarize how God's grace transforms believers through faith in Jesus Christ. What did they look like before they trusted Jesus? What do they look like after trusting Christ?

What parallels do you find between a believer's changed state in God's eyes and Mephibosheth's changed state in David's eyes?

Grace is positive acceptance in spite of the other person. Grace is a demonstration of love that isn't deserved and can never be repaid. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9



Application: Comparing Two Examples of Grace

Pastor Chuck Swindoll noticed several parallels between David's act of grace toward Mephibosheth and the grace God showed humankind when Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the price of sin. Take a few minutes to look over the parallels recorded in the chart below.

David and Mephibosheth	God and Humanity
Mephibosheth once enjoyed uninterrupted fellowship with King Saul and Jonathan.	Adam and Eve once enjoyed uninterrupted fellowship with God.
When Mephibosheth fell, he became physically crippled.	When Adam and Eve fell into sin, humankind became spiritually crippled.
David demonstrated grace to Mephibosheth out of sheer love for Jonathan.	God demonstrates grace to believing sinners out of love for His creation.
Mephibosheth had nothing, deserved nothing, and did nothing to earn the king's favor.	Humans have nothing, deserve nothing, and can do nothing to earn God's favor.
David restored Mephibosheth from a place of barrenness to a place of honor.	God restores believing sinners from a place of barrenness to a place of honor.
David adopted Mephibosheth into his family, and he became the king's son.	God adopts believing sinners into His family, and they become His children.
Mephibosheth's limp was a constant reminder of the grace David showed him.	A believer's struggle with sin is a constant reminder of God's grace and forgiveness.
When Mephibosheth sat down at the table of the king, he was treated as one of his sons.	One day, believers will feast with God, and they will be treated as His children forever.



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9

What parallels do you find in this chart between yourself and Mephibosheth? How has God shown you His *hesed* throughout your life?

What are some practical steps you can take to respond in gratitude to God for the unending grace He's shown you?

Sin has broken the soul of every person. Everyone, like Mephibosheth, runs and hides from God for fear of His punishment. Yet God is the God of grace, and He welcomes sinners into His throne room and invites them to sit at His table as His own children. All you need to do is accept the invitation.



Grace in a Barren Place

2 Samuel 9



A FINAL PRAYER

Wrap up your study today by reading the following poem by Julie Martin.² Put yourself in the seat of Mephibosheth and offer these words of gratitude to the King.

Grace in a Barren Place

I was that Mephibosheth
Crippled by my twisted pride and
 hiding from You in a barren place
 where You could not find me
 where You would not give me what I
 deserved
But somehow You found me and
I don't understand why but You
 gave me what I *do not* deserve
You not only spared my desolate life but
 You made it bountiful
And here at Your table
I will thank You my
 King.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Julie Martin, "Grace in a Barren Place," as quoted in Insight for Living Ministries, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny Bible Study Guide* (Anaheim, CA: Insight for Living, 1997), 126.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SIXTEEN

The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11

If you do not run as fast as you can run from temptation, you will fall—even if your life is like David's. It's only a matter of time. If you try to fight it by your own strength, you will fall.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE Bible never flatters its heroes. The picture of King David's life is painted with much beauty: his defeat of Goliath, his rise from shepherd to king, his political successes for Israel. Yet David was not without blemish. One thing remains clear about Israel's great king both in his victories and in his failures . . .

David was a man of *passion*.

When standing on the mountaintops of life, David's passion spilled out of his heart in the form of beautiful psalms saturated with love for his God. When he found himself in the deepest valleys, however, David's passion pushed him further into the darkness until he embraced some of the most egregious acts imaginable.

These next two *Searching the Scriptures* studies look at King David when his heart was furthest from God, when his heart was nearly consumed by the unquenchable fire of his own lust and self-preservation. Then, these studies will examine how he responded when a dear friend confronted him. David's example offers ever-true lessons in temptation and sin, repentance and redemption.



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The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11



PREPARE YOUR HEART

To set the tone for your Bible study today, offer David's words recorded in [Psalm 11:4–5, 7](#) as your prayer to your heavenly Father.

*But the LORD is in his holy Temple;
the LORD still rules from heaven.
He watches everyone closely,
examining every person on earth.
The LORD examines both the righteous and the wicked.
He hates those who love violence. . . .
For the righteous LORD loves justice.
The virtuous will see his face.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

David didn't dive straight into the waters of sin. Instead, he slowly waded in, allowing his body to acclimate gradually to its feeling before he moved in deeper into its murky depths.

His descent began almost as soon as he donned the crown of Israel. While standing beside God, he allowed sin's waters to splash on his feet. According to [2 Samuel 5:12–13](#), what did David do shortly after taking the throne? According to [Deuteronomy 17:14–17](#), why was this behavior problematic for Israel's new king?

By the time the narrative reaches 2 Samuel 11, David stood waist-deep in sin . . . and it wouldn't be long before he was drowning.



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11



Observation: Covering Up a Lustful Act

The account of David's hard fall into sin recorded in 2 Samuel 11 contains an abundance of practical applications. But before application comes interpretation, and before interpretation comes observation.¹ As you read this chapter, focus only on what the words say.

A Sensual Scene—2 Samuel 11:1–5

According to 2 Samuel 11:1, where was David supposed to be during this time of the year? Where was he instead?

While his men endured the hardships of warfare, David enjoyed the luxuries of royalty. One afternoon, he went for a walk on the roof of his palace. What did he notice in 11:2 while surveying Jerusalem?

According to 11:3–5, what did David do in response to what he saw? What was the result of these actions?



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11

David's in bed, not in battle. He neglects his job. He belongs with the troops. Had he been with them, there would never have been a Bathsheba episode. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

A Panic Plan—2 Samuel 11:6–27

Upon hearing those dreaded words, “I’m pregnant,” David knew he was in trouble, and he knew he needed to act fast. So, to cover up his wrongdoing, he called for Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah—one of David’s most faithful soldiers.

According to [2 Samuel 11:8](#), what did David ask Uriah to do, and what consequence did he intend? What did Uriah do instead in [11:9](#)?

Despite David’s best attempts, Uriah remained faithful to the cause of Israel and refused David’s request. Because of Uriah’s persistence, David devised a new scheme to hide his sin.

When David sent Uriah back to the battlefield, he provided a letter for Joab, the army’s commander. But little did Uriah realize . . . he carried his own death sentence. According to [11:14–15](#), what did David tell Joab to do with Uriah?



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11

According to 2 Samuel 11:16–17, did Joab listen to his king or disobey? What was the fate of Uriah?

In the space below, summarize how the following figures responded to the events recorded in this chapter: David (11:25), Bathsheba (11:26), and God (11:27).

David's sinful actions produced both intended and unintended consequences, and he harmed many people along the way: Bathsheba, Uriah, and the other soldiers who died in the fray. Yet sin had hardened his heart so much that the only thing he cared about was covering his own guilt. And it appeared to him as if he had succeeded.

But God saw his heart.



Interpretation: Sin's Lingering Result

The narrative preserved in 2 Samuel 11 presents David as the main character. He is the subject of almost all the verbs in 11:1–4. Looking at the New American Standard Bible, you see that David:

- Stayed at Jerusalem (11:1)
- Arose from his bed (11:2)
- Walked around on the roof (11:2)



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11

- Saw a woman bathing (2 Samuel 11:2)
- Inquired about the woman (11:3)
- Sent messengers (11:4)
- Took her (11:4)
- Lay with her (11:4)

What does this series of actions reveal about David's gradual movement toward sin? What timeless truths does David's example teach about sin and temptation?

Despite David's urging, Uriah remained committed to Israel's cause and to Israel's king. He chose to stay at the palace, rather than with his wife. What reason did Uriah give in [11:11](#) for not going home to Bathsheba? What is ironic about this situation considering David's choice in [11:1](#)?

How could David stoop to such a level? That's not hard to understand if you take an honest look at your own soul. His sin is no greater than your sin or mine. We are simply grateful ours have not been recorded. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11



Correlation: Resisting Temptation

David didn't roll over one night to suddenly find Bathsheba in his bed. In fact, he had plenty of chances to walk away—to tell himself *STOP!* But he didn't. Instead, he ran right into sin's enticing embrace.

In [1 Corinthians 10](#), Paul warns about the alluring appeal that temptation offers the people of God. While Paul did not address David's sin specifically, the apostle's words aptly correlate with David's experience. According to [10:12](#), whom did Paul address in this portion of the letter? What warning did he offer them?

What encouragement does Paul offer in [10:13](#) to those who face any temptation?

David stood stronger than any person in Israel. Yet David's confidence led to carelessness, and because he didn't watch his step, he stumbled. Whenever God reached out His hand to help David back to his feet, David slapped His hand away. The result? His face hit the ground. His example is a warning to the people of God today.



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11



Application: Godly People, Ungodly Desires

Though David was a man after God's own heart, he was not immune to the desires of the flesh, and even the great psalmist yielded to sin's siren song. David's example teaches several lessons valuable for any follower of Jesus Christ:

- The flesh is *powerful*.
- Daily renewing our devotion to God is *essential*.
- Overindulging ourselves is *dangerous*.
- Sin's ability to destroy our lives and the lives of those we love is *real*.

Can you think of a time when the desire of your flesh was so strong that you felt you couldn't resist? Did you collapse under the pressure, or did you run to God? How will knowing the truth that God "will show you a way out" affect you the next time you face such powerful temptation (*1 Corinthians 10:13*)?

Many struggle with lust like David, but his example applies to every kind of temptation: pride, lying, coveting, and unrighteous anger. Which sins do you tend to struggle with most? What need does this sin pretend to meet? How does God meet that need?



The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11

What practical steps can you take this week to renew your devotion to God so that you stand strong the next time temptation assaults your heart?

If you have the Holy Spirit, you have all the power you need to say no. God has given us that simple little monosyllabic word that flows so easily. And it works every time. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In a single chapter, David fell from mighty king to wretched sinner. If the story ended there, it would truly be tragic. Thankfully, David's story goes on. In the next chapter, he comes face-to-face with his own sin, and he reveals his heart for God through genuine repentance.



A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, ask God to deliver you from whatever temptation you may feel creeping close, and ask Him to prepare you to stand strong the next time sin knocks at your heart's door.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SEVENTEEN

Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15

We're living in a day of great compromise. And I want you to learn a lesson from Nathan as a confronter—that God's standard has not changed. Though the eras pass and lifestyles change, He is still holy.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

DAVID was a great man. God even called him a man after His own heart. Yet, David was a *sinner*. Reminders of this painful reality swarmed David like furious locusts—from every conversation with his new bride Bathsheba to every military briefing with his commander Joab.

David may have been guilty of lust, murder, hypocrisy, and deception, but *no one knew* . . . or so David thought. As naïve as it may seem, David thought the future looked bright. He could return to serving as Israel's noble king by hiding his dark past in the shadows.

But David couldn't hide his sin from God.

David's heart wasn't so hard that he was immune to feelings of guilt or shame. So, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David, to soften his heart, and to awaken his conscience. Would David listen to the words of this courageous friend?

This *Searching the Scriptures* study joins the prophet in the throne room to witness his confrontation of the king. Their interaction teaches important lessons about confronting evil, confessing sin, accepting forgiveness, and embracing repentance.



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Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15



PREPARE YOUR HEART

King David wrote many songs reflecting on this dark season of his life. Despite David's sin, these psalms shine with the hope of God's mercy. Pray the words of [Psalm 32:1–2, 5](#) as you begin your study today.

Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sin is put out of sight!
Yes, what joy for those
whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt,
whose lives are lived in complete honesty! . . .
Finally, I confessed all my sins to you
and stopped trying to hide my guilt.
I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD."
And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Two things stand out about David's many sins displayed in [2 Samuel 11](#). First, he sinned *willfully*. David knew it was wrong to stay behind in the palace while his men fought on the battlefield. He had a plan when he sent messengers to inquire about Bathsheba. He carefully devised a scheme to remove Uriah. These weren't accidental choices. They were deliberate.

Second, David sinned *in secret*. Being the most prominent figure in Israel awarded him certain privileges like privacy, and he abused this privacy to feed the fire of his own fleshly desires. As the fire grew, David needed to sin more and more to keep it satisfied . . . and quiet.

Yet the account ends with somber words: "But the LORD was displeased with what David had done" ([2 Samuel 11:27](#)). David couldn't keep his secrets from his omniscient God, and in [2 Samuel 12](#), God exposed David's sins through the prophet Nathan.



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15



Observation: Nathan's Confrontation

Nathan could have gone straight to David and enumerated all his sins, but David likely would have turned defensive and shunned Nathan before listening to his words. So the prophet approached his king wisely, first sharing the words of a story—a parable—rather than pointing his finger in accusation.

Read [2 Samuel 12](#). Carefully consider what it says.¹

A Parable—2 Samuel 12:1–4

Who were the two main characters in Nathan's story introduced in [2 Samuel 12:1](#)? How did Nathan demonstrate the difference between these two characters in [12:2–3](#)?

According to [12:3](#), how did the poor man treat his lone sheep?

When a guest came to the home of the rich man in [12:4](#), how did he feed his guest?



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15

No prophet was ever given a more difficult commission than Nathan. He was to stand before the most powerful man in the nation and tell him what no one else around the place would.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

An Accusation—2 Samuel 12:5–15

According to [2 Samuel 12:5](#), how did David react when Nathan finished telling the story? According to [12:6](#), what punishment did he think the rich man deserved?

After David's outburst, Nathan turned the condemning finger back at David declaring, "You are that man!" ([12:7](#)). This statement is the interpretive key that unlocks the symbolism of the parable. According to [12:7–10](#), what did each image in the parable represent?

Rich man: _____

Poor man: _____

Rich man's many sheep: _____

Poor man's lone sheep: _____

According to [12:11–14](#), what consequences would David face for his sin? How do these consequences correspond with David's outburst in [12:6](#)?



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15

What did David say in 2 Samuel 12:13 in response to Nathan's confrontation? What did Nathan say in return?

David knew that Nathan had exposed his secret. David couldn't hide his sin anymore. Rather than lying, hiding, or blame-shifting, David confessed his sin. In turn, God offered forgiveness—just like the apostle John later said: “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9).



Interpretation: David's Repentance

The interpretation phase of Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method uses what the text says to determine what it *means*. Good interpretation produces theological principles that remain true and valuable for God's people across time.

Many Old Testament narratives reveal timeless truths about the character of God. Based on the encounter between David and Nathan in 2 Samuel 12, what did you learn about God and His attributes?



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15

In the space below, write one or two timeless truths about confronting sin.

Now, write one or two timeless truths about genuine repentance.

David didn't have to say much to show his genuine repentance. Thankfully, God preserved in one beautiful psalm more of David's reaction to his conversation with Nathan.



Correlation: A Psalm of Repentance

After his confrontation with Nathan, David likely returned to his chambers seeking solitude from everyone other than God. He needed to get right with Him first and foremost. He may have prayed for a few minutes or a few hours. Maybe he even wept. Though these details remain unknown, David did record part of his prayer to God in *Psalms* 51.



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15

At several points in this psalm, David asked God to forgive his sins. According to [Psalm 51:1](#), why did David believe that God would show him mercy?

Although David sinned against many people in the episode with Bathsheba and Uriah, who was ultimately offended by his wicked actions, according to [51:4](#)?

According to [51:16–17](#), what “sacrifice” did David offer to atone for the sins he committed against God? What do these verses teach about true, heartfelt repentance?

No animal sacrifice is enough to pay the price of sin. But because of His mercy, God offered a perfect sacrifice—His own Son—on behalf of a sinful humanity. Jesus has done all the work. All you need to do is accept with open arms the gift of forgiveness.



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15



Application: Confrontation and Repentance Today

Pastor Chuck has developed two points of application based on Nathan's confrontation and David's repentance.

First, for confrontation to be effective, four qualities must be present:

1. *Absolute truth*
2. *Right timing*
3. *Wise words*
4. *Fearless courage*

Is there someone in your life who's currently shackled by his or her own sin? Your confrontation very well may be one of the keys that releases him or her from bondage. Using the four guidelines above, write out what you might say to confront this person courageously and lovingly. Ask God for His guidance and an opportunity to have a fruitful conversation.

If God calls you to confront sin, don't explain it away. Call it what it is. Call it sin. People long for the message of God. One of my prayers is that He will raise up a generation that will declare the truth—people who say what God has said and say it without fear.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15

Second, for repentance to be genuine, four characteristics must be evident:

1. *Open, unguarded admission*
2. *Desire to make a complete break from sin*
3. *A broken and humble spirit*
4. *Claiming God's forgiveness and reinstatement*

In Scripture, repentance refers to the changing of one's mind. The term paints the picture of someone walking down the path of sin and turning around to run in the entirely opposite direction toward righteousness . . . toward God. What path of sin has your life followed recently? What would it look like to turn around and run toward God?

Through Nathan's courageous confrontation, God took David at his lowest moment and brought him down to his knees in humble repentance. God wants to do the same with all His children—hopefully before they sink as low as David did. The Holy Spirit often convicts through a faithful friend like Nathan and even through the words of Scripture.



Confrontation!

2 Samuel 12:1–15



A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, ask God to deliver you from whatever temptation you may feel creeping close, and ask Him to prepare you to stand strong the next time sin knocks at your heart's door.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY EIGHTEEN

Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

If you've taken the grace of God lightly, tripping through the corridors of the kingdom like a little child, choosing sin at will, thinking grace covers it all . . . you've missed it. As a matter of fact, it's quite likely you're facing consequences, but you don't realize that you're harvesting the bitter blossoms of your seeds planted way back then.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

CHOICES have consequences. Good actions usually yield pleasant results. Hard work often provides a sense of accomplishment and success. Fulfilled promises foster loyalty.

Bad choices, however, generally produce thorny consequences. Poor attention to detail results in shoddy workmanship. Overt dishonesty damages trust. When someone sins, a whole new mess of problems entangles not only the sinner but also those close to him or her.

Because everyone yields to temptation's whisper from time to time, no one is free from sin's consequences and impact on others . . . not even the most powerful person in the land.

King David moved through his darkest season like a snake—slithering from one sin to another, avoiding those who sought to catch him and uncover his wickedness. Yet he couldn't dodge their heels forever, and the prophet Nathan eventually caught him, confronted him, and extended forgiveness.

With his sin now exposed, what consequences did David face? How did he react? What can followers of Jesus today learn from his example? This *Searching the Scriptures* study addresses these questions and more!



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Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25



PREPARE YOUR HEART

You may have an acute awareness that some of your poorer choices have led to quite painful consequences, and you may feel sin's effects in your life even at this very moment. Before you turn to the Scriptures today, offer this prayer of lament from David.

*O LORD, don't rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your rage.
Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak.
Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
I am sick at heart.
How long, O LORD, until you restore me? (Psalm 6:1–3)*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Although David thought he had successfully hidden all his evil choices, God saw everything David did, and He sent the prophet Nathan to expose David's sin. When David confessed his wrongdoing, Nathan extended God's mercy: "The LORD has forgiven you" (2 Samuel 12:13).

God washed David's heart clean of his sin, yet he still had to endure the aftereffects. Speaking for God, Nathan said, "Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes, and he will go to bed with them in public view" (12:11).

The punishment fits the crime. During the following years, David watched this prophecy gradually meet its fulfillment among his own family members. *Second Samuel 12–18* unfolds the proceeding events.



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25



Observation: Eight Consequences of David's Choices

Carefully observe the following passages from [2 Samuel 12–18](#) to see the natural effects of David's sin on himself, his wives, and his children.¹

The First Consequence—2 Samuel 12:14–23

According to Nathan's prophecy in [2 Samuel 12:14](#), what was the first consequence of David's sinful actions? (This prophecy came true in [12:15–18](#).) What reason did Nathan give for this consequence?

The Second Consequence—2 Samuel 13:1–15

David's son Amnon loved his half-sister Tamar. But this wasn't affectionate, brotherly love. In fact, it's better to say that Amnon *lusted* after Tamar. So Amnon devised a scheme to get alone with Tamar ([2 Samuel 13:1–10](#)). Summarize what happened between them in [13:11–15](#).



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The Third Consequence—2 Samuel 13:16–22

When Absalom, Tamar's full brother, heard about Amnon's horrific action, a storm of hatred for his half-brother raged in his heart (2 Samuel 13:22). According to 13:21, how did David react to this growing tempest of domestic discord? What did he do—or *not* do—in response?

The Fourth Consequence—2 Samuel 13:23–29

Absalom waited for two years for David to bring justice to Amnon. When he realized David wouldn't act, he took matters into his own hands (2 Samuel 13:23–27). What did he finally do in 13:28–29?

The Fifth Consequence—2 Samuel 13:30–39

According to 2 Samuel 13:34, 38–39, what did Absalom do when David discovered what he had done to Amnon?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The Sixth Consequence—2 Samuel 14:1–15:15

Despite the wise counsel around him, David remained indignant against Absalom and refused reconciliation (*2 Samuel 14:1–33*). What did Absalom do in response in *15:1–4*? According to *15:5–6*, how did the Israelites view Absalom after these events? How did David respond to these events in *15:13–15*?

The Seventh Consequence—2 Samuel 16:15–23

According to *2 Samuel 16:21–22*, what else did Absalom do to spite his father at the urging of his turncoat advisor Ahithophel?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The Eighth Consequence—2 Samuel 18:1–33

To stay safe from Absalom, David handed to Joab command of the campaign against Absalom, and he gave his trusted friend one order: treat Absalom gently (2 Samuel 18:1–5). But Joab stumbled into an opportunity he simply couldn't resist. According to 18:9–15, what happened to Absalom, and what did Joab do in response?

In response to these events, “The king was overcome with emotion. He went up to the room over the gateway and burst into tears” (18:33). Even though God forgave David, the king's arms still carried the full burden of the consequences of his choices, and in the process, he lost three children. Was the moment of pleasure worth the lifetime of regret?

Surely, David would say no.

Grace means that God forgives you. It doesn't mean the consequences are automatically removed. If I sin, and in the process of sinning, I break my arm, when I find forgiveness from sin, I still have to deal with a broken arm. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Finding God's Grace through Consequences

David's children didn't start making wicked choices arbitrarily. Rather, they simply followed their father's example. How do you see David's own sinful tendencies in his children?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

Even though God forgave David's sin, He didn't stop the consequences of David's choices from assaulting him and his family. How does this seemingly contradictory idea help you better understand the complexities of God's grace and how it touches the lives of His people?

We've told ourselves that grace means sin's consequences will be removed rather than believing that we don't have to sin. You have the power in the Holy Spirit to say no to sin at every turn in your life. If you choose to say yes, you can be certain you will live in the backwash of the consequences. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: You Reap What You Sow

One of the most common platitudes you hear today is, “You reap what you sow.” This is not simply conventional human wisdom. Rather, it comes from God Himself! The apostle Paul discussed the importance of this truth in [Galatians 6:7–10](#).

In what ways did David sow “to his own flesh”? How did he consequently “reap corruption” for himself and his family ([6:8 NASB](#))? Review Nathan's prophecy in [2 Samuel 12:7–12](#).

The pain of the harvest eclipses the pleasure of the planting. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

What could David have done differently throughout this sinful season of his life to sow to God rather than to himself (*Galatians 6:8*)? How would David's circumstances have turned out differently as a result?

If only Paul had lived in ancient Israel as one of King David's advisers! Then, David may have made some different choices. Thankfully, followers of Jesus Christ have David's example and Paul's words to guide them as they consider the consequences of their choices today.



Application: Sowing Wise Choices, Reaping Welcome Consequences

David's example teaches a hard lesson. Have you—like David—ever reaped the difficult consequences of sin you previously had sown? What thoughts or feelings do you have as you look back on the decision you made? What can you learn from this experience about yourself, God, sin, or grace?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The best way to guard against the storm of consequences created by sin is to flee as soon as you feel the winds of temptation blowing. What temptations typically feel most alluring to you? What consequences await on the horizon if you were to yield to these temptations?

This difficult season of David's life proved Paul right: you do indeed reap what you sow. Yet because of God's grace, those who believe in Christ have the freedom to resist the urges of the flesh. By the power of the Spirit, you can choose to sow seeds of righteousness and goodness that will reap an eternal harvest of God's blessing. You have hope beyond your sin.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I confess that I have willingly sinned against You, and I accept the consequences of my actions. I also embrace Your grace and know that You have forgiven me of my sins. I ask You to remind me of David's example the next time I feel tempted so that I might run from sin into Your loving embrace. In Jesus' gracious name I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY NINETEEN

Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25

In our study in the life of David, we have come to this impasse. Some of the most difficult experiences for the child of God to endure come in the backwash of sin. David teaches us an unforgettable lesson: we are to take God seriously.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHEN God sent Hosea to extend His judgment to a sinful Israel, the prophet proclaimed: “They have planted the wind and will harvest the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7).

Hundreds of years earlier, rather than resting securely in the shelter of God’s wings, King David chased the winds of his own wicked desires. He took Bathsheba from her husband Uriah and then killed him. David schemed and deceived and thought that he had hidden his sin—that the winds had died down.

Yet a whirlwind awaited David.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study follows David into the storm borne from his own sinful choices. Did David get lost in the tempest of sin’s consequences, or did he remain buoyant in God through faith? David’s example reveals how followers of Jesus today can ride out the storm of sin’s aftereffects.



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Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you prepare your heart to receive the stabilizing truth of God's Word, pray [Psalm 51:16–17](#), the very words David said to prepare his heart for the whirlwind of consequences that awaited him.

*You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.
The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Upon the prophet Nathan's courageous confrontation of David, the humbled king replied, "I have sinned against the LORD" ([2 Samuel 12:13](#)).

Nathan extended forgiveness to David on God's behalf, but he acknowledged that David would harvest a whirlwind because he planted the winds of sin. The winds of this storm of consequences started to blow in [2 Samuel 12:15–25](#). The first gust to strike David was the death of his and Bathsheba's newborn child.

We reap what we sow, forgiveness notwithstanding. But even in forgiveness, there is not the immediate erasing of the consequences. In God's own way and for God's own purpose, He will take you through a period of time where there will be the whirlwind, sometimes more painful than others. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Observation: David's Reaping of the Whirlwind

To lay the foundation of sound Bible study, one must always begin with observation of a passage. As you read, focus only on what the text says, and carefully observe both David's words and his actions.¹



Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25

According to 2 Samuel 12:16, how did David initially respond when he discovered that his and Bathsheba's child was ill as Nathan had predicted in 12:14?

As David began to endure the consequences of his actions, he didn't run *from* God. He ran *to* Him. Yet God still allowed David's child to die. What did David's advisers say in 12:18 when they discovered that the child had passed? What do you think they expected David to do?

Ultimately, David defied the expectations of his advisers. According to 12:20–21, what did David *actually* do when he discovered that his child was dead?



Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25

David's advisers scratched their heads at their king's actions. When the child was ill, David fasted, and once the child had passed, David started eating again. According to [2 Samuel 12:22–23](#), how did David explain his own change in behavior?

We may be sure that when we drop the seeds of the wind, we will reap the harvest of a whirlwind. But grace is our help during the whirlwind to hold us together, to keep us strong, to stabilize us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to [12:24](#), what did David do after meeting with his advisers?

Because of David's sin, he faced God's discipline in one of the most difficult ways imaginable—through the loss of his own child. Rather than shaking his fist at the sky, David accepted God's consequence with humility. David may have sinned, but he still was a man after God's own heart, and he recognized that God was in control—even in the storm.



Interpretation: Weathering the Storm

The interpretation phase of Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method builds upon the foundation of observation to determine timeless principles that remain true for followers of Jesus Christ even today. For each of the following verses, develop a timeless truth about facing the storm of consequences due to sinful choices.



Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25

Key Verse: “David begged God to spare the child. He went without food and lay all night on the bare ground” (2 Samuel 12:16).

Key Verse: “But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me” (12:23).

Key Verse: “Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David named him Solomon” (12:24).

David, in riding out the storm, gives us some beautiful guidelines. He prayed. He faced the consequences realistically. He turned it all over to the Lord completely as he claimed the scriptural truth concerning death. And then, refusing to give up, he moved on.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25



Correlation: Israel's Storm

When Hosea said, “They have planted the wind and will harvest the whirlwind” ([Hosea 8:7](#)), he didn’t simply offer some wise advice. Instead, he spoke to the people of Israel the very words of God, warning them that they would face consequences for drifting from God and His ways.

According to [Hosea 8:1](#), what whirlwind were the people of Israel about to harvest?

In [8:1–14](#), God explained what winds Israel planted that led to this consequence. Read these verses, and write down the sinful actions that stand out to you. What was Israel’s fundamental problem before God?

Thankfully, Hosea’s book doesn’t end there. Instead, the prophet shows a balance between judgment and hope, reflecting both God’s justice and His mercy. Read [11:8–11](#). What hope do these words offer to God’s people who have sinned and bear the weight of sin’s consequences?



Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25

“How can I give you up?” What powerful words from the loving Father! Yes, God is *just*, and He will not look away as His children disobey Him. But He also is *merciful*. He loves His children, and He wants them to flourish despite their sin.

Like a loving earthly father, God allows His children to face the consequences of their actions as an act of discipline so they can learn and grow and lean into His strong embrace. *Are you facing such discipline right now?* Remember, God’s grace and guidance helps you ride out the storm.



Application: Riding Out Today’s Storms

From this account of David’s sin and its aftereffects, Pastor Chuck makes four observations about weathering sin’s consequences:

- It is a *lonely* experience.
- It is a *learning* experience.
- It is a *temporary* experience.
- It is a *humbling* experience.

Think back to a time when you planted the wind of sin and harvested a whirlwind of consequences. How did your experience reflect Pastor Chuck’s four observations above? What did God teach you through that experience?



Riding Out the Storm

2 Samuel 12:15–25

Perhaps you currently feel lost in a tempest of consequences. You may feel very lonely right now, but take heart—this season is only temporary! How can you follow David's example and ride out this storm in a way that trusts and honors God and leads to your own personal, spiritual growth?

Harvesting the whirlwind often reveals just how foolish planting the wind is. Sadly, no one can go back in time and undo sinful choices. The good news, however, is that God will keep His children afloat through the storm if they hold fast to Christ, the sure and steady anchor. "And the calm will be the better for the storms that we endure."²



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I confess I have sinned against You countless times throughout my life, and I have harvested the consequences of these sinful choices. I pray, as I face these consequences, You will show me grace to carry me through the storm. Use these times to shape me to look more like Jesus when I emerge from the tempest. In Jesus' merciful name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Matt Boswell and Matt Papa, "Christ, the Sure and Steady Anchor," hymnary.org. © 2015 Messenger Hymns (BMI) / Getty Music Publishing (BMI) / Getty Music Hymns and Songs (ASCAP) / Love Your Enemies Publishing (ASCAP) / Getty Hymns and Songs (ASCAP) (all admin. by Music Services).



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY

Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

We have been taught the wrong thing regarding independence in the family of God. I was taught that if you are mature, you don't need anybody else. Just barrel on through life. Maybe you've been taught that it's a sign of weakness and immaturity to have a friend or to need a friend. That is not true.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EVERYONE needs a friend. Friends provide companionship in times of loneliness, comfort in times of pain, celebration in times of rejoicing, protection in times of need. The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge perfectly depicted the image of a friend: “Friendship is a sheltering tree.”¹

Few understood the value of the shelter offered by dear friends better than David. Samuel walked with him as he gained national prominence. Jonathan ran with him when the bloodthirsty King Saul wanted nothing more than to kill him. Nathan wept with him as he repented for his sin in the darkest season of his life.

David's need for close companions persisted until the very end of his life. In one particularly stormy season, his own son Absalom staged a coup against him and attempted to steal the crown of Israel. During this time, friends surrounded David like a dense grove of trees, providing him shelter from his son's assault.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will introduce those friends who stood strong as sheltering trees for David during this difficult time. These friendships teach what to look for in godly companions and how to act as a good friend for those in need.



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Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Sadly, Absalom's insatiable desire for the throne created discord between himself and his father. Yet David desired harmony in his relationship with his son. Pray David's words from [Psalm 133](#) as you prepare to search the Scriptures today.

*How wonderful and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in harmony!
For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil
that was poured over Aaron's head,
that ran down his beard
and onto the border of his robe.
Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon
that falls on the mountains of Zion.
And there the LORD has pronounced his blessing,
even life everlasting.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The longer David held the king's scepter over Israel, the more his life spiraled out of his control. Personally, he wrestled with the guilt of his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah. Domestically, he felt the whirlwind of consequences created by his own sinful choices ravage his own family. Politically, his kingdom started to crumble before his very eyes.

These struggles all seemed to converge in [2 Samuel 15:1–12](#) when David's son Absalom decided to try to supplant his father as king. He slowly won the people of Israel to his side until he had formed a full-fledged rebellion against David. So, in [15:13–15](#), David fled from his own home, away from his hostile son.

Though this may have seemed like the loneliest season of David's life yet, God surrounded the estranged king with many friends who sheltered him from Absalom's rebellion.



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8



Observation: David's Needs

While David fled from the rebellion staged by his own son, close friends came to his aid several times. Read the following five passages, and as you read, focus on what each passage says, paying special attention to what each friend did to shelter David.²

Ittai—2 Samuel 15:16–23

David's closest friends and confidantes joined him in his escape because they, too, feared Absalom. Also, some unexpected hangers-on joined the caravan: six-hundred Philistines, Israel's archenemies! When David saw this, what did he tell their leader Ittai in [2 Samuel 15:19–20](#)? How did Ittai respond in [15:21](#)?

Zadok and Abiathar—2 Samuel 15:24–31

The priests Zadok and Abiathar also joined David on his exodus from Jerusalem, and they brought with them the ark of the covenant ([2 Samuel 15:24](#)). The ark represented God's presence and favor. According to [15:25–26](#), what did David ask these priests to do with the ark? Why might they have been surprised by this request? According to [15:29](#), did they do it?



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

Hushai—2 Samuel 15:32–37

According to 2 Samuel 15:34–36, what request did David make of Hushai? What was he to tell Absalom he intended to do in Jerusalem (15:34)? What would be his *actual* purpose (15:35–36)? According to 15:37, did he honor David's request?

Shobi, Makir, Barzillai—2 Samuel 17:27–29

How did the three men David met at Mahanaim in 2 Samuel 17:28–29 help him after he escaped from Absalom through the wilderness? Notice how their help was entirely unprompted!

Joab—2 Samuel 19:1–8

After a long season of running, David's conflict with Absalom finally concluded. While the two armies clashed, Absalom attempted to escape, but he accidentally got caught in a tree (2 Samuel 18:9–10). When David's trusted commander, Joab, heard the news of Absalom's predicament, he killed Absalom despite David's request to treat Absalom gently (18:5, 14–15).



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

Even though David the king had won the victory over Absalom's rebellion, David the father had lost a son, and the loss eclipsed the victory. According to 2 Samuel 19:5–7, what did Joab say to reassure David despite his grief?

When everything else fails and everybody else has turned away, there will be precious few who will say, "I'm with you. I'm there. Count on me. I won't kick you when you're down. I understand." David had such friends. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Friends Who Stand Near

Interpretation is the process of determining what a text *means* based on what it says. Now that you've closely observed David's interactions with his friends during Absalom's pursuit, you can now consider what timeless truths these passages teach about friendship.

What unique dangers did David's friends face by helping him amid Absalom's rebellion? Why might they have chosen to help him anyway? What does their loyalty teach about their faith in God?



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

In the space below, write two or three timeless truths you learned about godly friendship from David's interactions with his friends. Use the following phrase to develop your principles: *Christians can demonstrate godly friendship by . . .*

I love passages like these because they put the glory in the Lord's hands—where it belongs—as He works through no-names. Those are the heroes who helped David pull it off. Is that your ministry? I praise God that you're in the trenches encouraging and ministering and supporting and giving. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Wisdom for Healthy Friendships

David's wise son Solomon wrote many proverbs about the importance of friendship. He likely learned many of these lessons by watching his father! Read the following proverbs, and summarize what each says about friendship. Then, note how David's friends reflected the qualities celebrated in these wise sayings.

Proverbs 12:26



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24

Without his dear friends displaying godly qualities like loving self-sacrifice, David never would have survived Absalom's rebellion. Thankfully, David had spent his life nourishing friendships that would shelter him until his dying day. What does it look like for a follower of Jesus Christ to cultivate his or her own grove of friends today?



Application: Timeless Truths about Friends

In Pastor Chuck Swindoll's study of this account of David and his friends, he made four observations about friends. These timeless truths can guide anyone in her or her friendships.

- *Friends are essential.* There is no substitute for a good friend.
- *Friendship must be cultivated.* Closeness doesn't happen automatically.
- *Friends impact our lives—either positively or negatively.* Their impact isn't neutral.
- *Friends can range from casual to close to intimate.*



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

Friends impact us. If you run with good friends, you become a better person. You run with bad friends, you become worse. Choose them carefully. Choose them wisely.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Do you agree that friends are essential? Has a friend ever met a physical, emotional, or spiritual need that no one else could meet?

As you consider the friendships you've cultivated, how have these people impacted you? Has any friend's personality, actions, or attitude rubbed off on you in a particularly positive or negative way? What has this taught you about which friendships you will choose to nourish going forward?

Whom do you consider your most intimate friends? Your list is probably pretty short. And that's normal! Although you might have few intimate friends, you can enjoy the highest levels of honesty and vulnerability with them. Practically speaking, how can you openly encourage these dearest friends in their walk with Jesus Christ?



Friends in Need

2 Samuel 15; 17:27–29; 19:1–8

Friends are essential. They meet relational needs no one else can—not a parent, not a sibling, not a spouse. Yet everyone is faced with a difficult decision because each person gets to choose his or her friends. What kinds of friends will you choose? Friends who abandon you in your hour of greatest need? Or sheltering trees who will shield you from life's harsh storms?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for all the friends you've brought to me throughout my life, and thank You for giving me the greatest friend in Your Son Jesus Christ. Help me learn from David's friends so I may be a sheltering tree to those closest to me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Youth and Age," in *Poems That Live Forever*, comp. Hazel Felleman (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 256.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-ONE

Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

My desire in going through the life of David is not just to give you the historical scoop on his life so you walk away with a notebook full of facts. My desire is to have you see yourself in David's shoes so you begin to emulate some of his godly qualities, one of which is forgiveness.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

JESUS once said, “But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love” ([Luke 7:47](#)). Conversely, a person who is forgiven much shows much love . . . and much forgiveness.

When your thoughtless words or careless actions assault those you hold dear, seeing their pain can produce in your soul the poison of guilt that will gradually eat you alive. The only antidote is forgiveness. Any experience of forgiveness will remain with you, and the next time someone hurts you, you will more freely offer him or her the same remedy of forgiveness.

King David was poisoned by guilt for taking Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah, but he longed for healing. When David finally confessed his sin, God fully cured him of his guilt, and the prophet Nathan proclaimed, “Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you” ([2 Samuel 12:13](#)).

Now that David was healed, he would never be the same. Despite his renewed gracious attitude toward others, many still mistreated him. In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, David becomes the offended. Did the Lord's therapy enable him to forgive as he had been forgiven?



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Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Scripture contains few images of forgiveness more beautiful than those preserved in [Psalm 103:10–12](#). Pray these words from David as you prepare your heart for what God wants to teach you about forgiveness today.

*He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.
For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.
He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The consequences of David's sin produced a great deal of domestic discord for his family. Specifically, his son Absalom held him in great contempt and conspired to steal the throne. Eventually, Absalom's conspiracy gave birth to a full-blown rebellion that forced David to escape from Jerusalem.

Amid Absalom's pursuit, David encountered a stranger who caused serious problems for David. Turn now to [2 Samuel 16:5–13](#) and [19:16–23](#) to see how David handled this situation.



Observation: Resisting and Embracing Forgiveness

Pastor Chuck Swindoll doesn't develop his life-changing applications from his own imagination. Instead, the branches of application always find their roots firmly planted in careful observation of Scripture.

In his studies, Pastor Chuck always looks for contrasts—words, ideas, and characters that are “unlike” another.¹ As you observe these passages, pay careful attention to the contrast between David's attitude and that of his commander Abishai.



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

Shimei's Offense—2 Samuel 16:5–13

As David escaped from Jerusalem, he encountered a man named Shimei from Saul's extended family. According to 2 Samuel 16:6–7, what did Shimei do and say to David as he approached?

After witnessing the interactions between David and Shimei, how did Abishai suggest David respond in 16:9?

How did David respond in 16:10 to Abishai's suggestion? According to 16:11–12, what reason did he give for his response?



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

David's Response—2 Samuel 19:16–23

Eventually, David's top officer Joab killed Absalom and ended the rebellion. On his way back to Jerusalem, David encountered Shimei yet again. According to 2 Samuel 19:16–18a, how did Shimei treat David differently the second time they met?

What request did Shimei make of David in 19:18b–20? How does this request explain his change in attitude toward David?

How did Abishai respond to Shimei in 19:21? How did David's response in 19:22–23 differ from Abishai's?

Do you know why David could forgive? First, his vertical focus never got out of sync. And second, he was very much aware of his own failure. You know who make good forgivers? The forgiven. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23



Interpretation: The Remedy of Forgiveness

David wasn't obligated to extend mercy to Shimei. He could have created an illusion of mercy by responding in one of three disingenuous ways. David could have offered . . .

- *Conditional forgiveness*: "I will forgive you *if* . . ."
- *Partial forgiveness*: "I will forgive you, *but* . . ."
- *Delayed forgiveness*: "I will forgive you *later* . . ."

Why might David have been tempted to show this kind of inauthentic "forgiveness" to Shimei? What did David's merciful response communicate to Shimei, to Abishai, and to the people of Israel?

An important part of forgiveness is understanding the motives behind the actions of the person who hurt you. Put yourself in Shimei's sandals. Why do you think he chose to assault David with his words? See [2 Samuel 16:5, 8](#) and [Constable's Notes](#) at netbible.org for additional context.



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

How does forgiveness heal both the sinner and the victim? How do you see this healing occurring in both Shimei and David in this account?

You take a downward plunge when you don't forgive. First, there is an offense. Then if there isn't forgiveness, there is resentment. Following resentment is hatred. Then hatred leads to a grudge. And finally a grudge settles in revenge. It's amazing how much of this goes on in the family of Christians . . . just amazing. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: How Often Should I Forgive?

During King Jesus' earthly ministry, His disciples asked Him, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" ([Matthew 18:1](#)). Jesus answered this brief question with a long sermon, and He makes a clear point at the end of His message: Those who forgive are greatest in Jesus' kingdom.

But Peter had a burning question: What's the cutoff point? How many times does a brother or sister need to hurt me before I stop forgiving?

According to [18:22](#), how many times did Jesus say someone should forgive? (Hint: His answer is a figure of speech. If you want guidance in interpreting Jesus' words, consult your [Bible study tools](#).)



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

Jesus explained Himself through a parable. Summarize Jesus' parable in [Matthew 18:23–35](#). Who are the main characters? What is the sequence of events? What are the characters' attitudes at different points in the story?

In your own words, summarize the point of Jesus' parable. What does this account teach about God's forgiveness of those who trust in Jesus Christ and about believers' forgiveness of one another?

Jesus has cancelled the enormous debt of sin for those who place their trust in Him. By comparison, the wrongs His children commit against one another seem like small change. This parable leads citizens of the kingdom of heaven to think, *If Jesus has forgiven me in the big things, I certainly can forgive others in the small things.*



Application: Learning to Forgive

Forgiving is hard. Jesus and David may make it seem easy, but even they would likely admit how difficult it is to let an offense go. Based on David's forgiveness of Shimei, Pastor Chuck offers four tips for those struggling to forgive.

1. *Cultivate a thick skin.* Shimei's words could have cut David to the heart, but these insults didn't hurt him because he knew God had chosen him to replace Saul.
2. *Try to understand where the offender is coming from.* David looked beyond Shimei's offense and peered into his heart and mind. That takes grace!



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

3. *Recall times in your life when you needed forgiveness.* David remembered how he felt begging God for forgiveness, and he applied that same emotion through compassion.
4. *Verbalize your forgiveness.* David swore to Shimei, “Your life will be spared.” Though Shimei deserved death, David forgave him—*out loud*—and offered him life.

“I forgive you.” Those words are marvelous therapy. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In the space below, write about a time you experienced forgiveness from a loved one.

An unforgiving spirit can lead to resentment, hatred, grudges, and revenge. Have you witnessed this downward spiral in others . . . or even in yourself?

Is there someone in your life from whom you’ve withheld forgiveness? What reasons have you given yourself for not forgiving? How would extending openhanded forgiveness to this person benefit both you personally and the person who hurt you?



Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

David had been forgiven much, so he was able to forgive much. This account of David is more than a mere example. Rather, it is a roadmap because all who have placed their faith in Jesus have received forgiveness for an insurmountable debt. Remember His mercy today, and allow it to strengthen you as you offer forgiveness to others.



A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, write your own prayer to God. Ask Him to remind you of His forgiveness. And if someone in your life needs your forgiveness, ask for the strength to show mercy. But don't leave forgiveness at the altar. Go to the person, verbalize your forgiveness, and delight in the healing that God's mercy has offered you both.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 101.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-TWO

A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22

Are times hard? Are there troubled days upon you? Believe me, from this psalm you have the assurance that the Lord takes delight in you in your time of need.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

GROWING old has its benefits. Greying hair and wrinkled skin reflect the years of hard-earned wisdom and skill. These benefits of lifelong experience seem particularly evident among artists. Many painters, poets, authors, and musicians produce their best work toward the end of their lives.

For King David, on the other hand, his final days were not his best days. One might expect David to have ended his rule with successful political schemes or grand military victories. But during his last days, his kingdom, his family, and his own spirit were weaker than they had ever been.

Yet, he enjoyed mastery of one skill that helped him through these difficult days. Long before he signed royal decrees, he composed music—songs for his people, songs for his God.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study invites us to listen to David sing his swan song. Contrary to what you might expect based on his immediate circumstances, His song is a song of triumph and faith. It reflects upon a long and difficult life lived for God, offering timeless lessons about how those who desire to be people after God's own heart can endure life's hardest moments.



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A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you prepare your heart to encounter the truth of God's Word, meditate on [Psalm 37:23–25, 39–40](#) from David's final years of life. Ask God to reveal Himself to you and to carry you through your remaining days.

*The LORD directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives.
Though they stumble, they will never fall,
for the LORD holds them by the hand.
Once I was young, and now I am old.
Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned
or their children begging for bread. . . .
The LORD rescues the godly;
he is their fortress in times of trouble.
The LORD helps them,
rescuing them from the wicked.
He saves them,
and they find shelter in him.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Though David could have spent his last days looking back with pure satisfaction about the many wonderful things God had accomplished through him, many challenges still heaped loads of grief upon his heart.

First, David lost his rebellious son Absalom. Even though the king stopped Absalom's coup, his son nevertheless died in the process. Second, a famine swept over Israel for three years, leaving the land desolate and the people with little food. Finally, the Philistines—those age-old enemies David had battled his whole life—waged war against Israel yet again.

David could have looked at his circumstances and painted his life with one word: *failure*. Even so, David loved God, trusted Him, and saw Him successfully working out His plan despite David's shortcomings. In 2 Samuel 22, David offers a song of praise to God for all the triumphs He produced both in and through David's life.



A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22



Observation: God's Deliverance, David's Praise

Read the song preserved in [2 Samuel 22](#) through from beginning to end one time before answering the following questions. As you read, imagine an old and weary David sitting alone in his throne room offering this song in prayer to his God.

According to [22:1](#), when did David write this song?

Having read the whole psalm, note David's emotions and attitude.

Now, read the song again, and as you read, gradually fill in the answers to each question below, focusing on observation.¹ Notice how David stacked his images, and look out especially for repeated words and ideas.

How did David describe his own difficult circumstances?



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-TWO

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22

How did David describe God and His character?

What did God do to rescue David from his circumstances?

How did David describe his relationship with God?

Though David felt like his life was crumbling, God held him together, all the while forging him into a man of great faith. As soon as David realized this hopeful reality, he had no other desire than to pick up his harp and sing praises to his God.



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S22
4

A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22



Interpretation: Ancient Song, Timeless Truth

While the beautiful poetry of David's song fills the mind with pictures of God's love and power, it may be difficult to discern what these images mean for God's people. Use the questions below to guide your interpretation of *2 Samuel 22*.

Pick the most meaningful images David used to express and to praise God's character. What do these images teach?

How is David's attitude instructive for followers of Jesus who face difficult circumstances today?

What is the theme verse of this song of David? Summarize this verse's main idea in your own words.



A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22

God is our only light and strength and security and hope. He alone. Not our family. Not our church. Not our job. Certainly not this world. He alone will be there when everything else fades from the scene. Do you really believe that? I mean really believe that? It will transform your life if you really do. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Paul's Pain, God's Response

Like David, the apostle Paul endured a season when he desperately needed reassurance from God. And like David's sufferings, Paul's trials taught him important lessons about himself and about God's character.

Read [2 Corinthians 12:7b–10](#). According to [12:7b](#), what was the source of Paul's pain? Why did he suffer this way? (For some insights into this tricky verse, feel free to consult your [Bible study tools](#).)

According to [12:8](#), what did Paul do about his suffering? According to [12:9](#), how did God respond to Paul?



A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22

What lessons did Paul learn about himself and about God through this experience according to 2 Corinthians 12:9–10?

Aren't Paul's words hard to put into action? We want to be strong. And yet he declares a very key principle in the Christian life: God is never stronger in His work than when we are weak. When we have come to an end, He has come to His beginning.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

When I am weak, then I am strong. Both Paul and David realized that strength doesn't come from mere grit or determination. No, true strength comes from dependence on God, and people rely on Him only when they admit how desperately they need Him. Do you recognize this need in your own life today? Consider this question as you work through application for this passage.



Application: Troubled Days, Blessed Assurance

Based on David's godly reflection of the essential role of God's guiding hand in his life, Pastor Chuck Swindoll developed four points of application for Christians enduring a difficult season.

- When times are tough, the Lord is our only security.
- When days are dark, the Lord is our only light.
- When our walk is weak, the Lord is our only strength.
- When our future is foggy, the Lord is our only hope.



A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22

Can you connect with David's feelings prior to writing his song of triumph? Are you enduring a difficult season right now? Do you feel like you're failing in your faith journey? Are you uncertain or worried about what awaits you down the line? Record how so and why.

In what ways has God proven to be your security, light, strength, or hope in the past? How does remembering these examples of God's faithfulness encourage you to hold fast to Him amid your difficult circumstances?

The reason we have trouble believing He is our only hope, security, light, and strength is because we try everything else. We have too many built-in crutches to which we turn automatically. And I openly declare that as being my problem just as well as it's your problem. Yet He waits patiently to show Himself strong. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

What would it look like for you to follow David's example by embracing a posture of worship and faith despite your hardships? Write down some practical steps you can take below.



A Song of Triumph

2 Samuel 22

David easily could have retraced the steps of his life and stopped only at his lowest moments, lamenting his folly and regretting his mistakes. Instead, David knew that God magnified his strength despite his own weaknesses. So he turned to God in worship. Through David's inspired song that has been preserved through the centuries, Jesus invites us to do the same.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I know times will come when I feel burdened by life and distant from You. During these seasons, show me Your love, grace, and faithfulness, and remind me of all the times You've acted as a guiding light during my darkest days. Thank You for caring for me throughout my life. Help me remain faithful to You until my very last day. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



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DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-THREE

When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

It would be wonderful if I could say that we are guaranteed immunity from sin as we grow older. We will never in this life be immune from sin's appeal . . . ever. Often those who fall the hardest are those who have walked with God the longest. There is no such thing as outgrowing sin.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

ROLE models are like a lighthouse in a storm, providing guidance for those adrift in the dark seas of life. Yet when these beacons of light go dim—when a trusted family member, teacher, coach, or pastor fails—those who are stuck in the storm can feel more lost than ever.

These moments of failure inflict particularly painful damage when the one who falls is a *spiritual* role model. It may feel like such falling is seemingly impossible, but the sad reality is that *anyone can fall*. Sin's power and presence will remain in this life for everyone, and it can pull anyone into the darkness if allowed. Even those considered the godliest can fall if they aren't vigilant.

So how should a person live with this hard reality that even the godliest people will waver in their faith? This *Searching the Scriptures* study explores this question by examining one sinful decision King David made toward the end of his life.



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When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21



PREPARE YOUR HEART

David knew he wasn't immune to the temptation of the flesh, and in his moments of weakness, he turned to God for strength. Pray the words of [Psalm 141:1–4](#) as you prepare to engage with Scripture today.

*O LORD, I am calling to you. Please hurry!
Listen when I cry to you for help!
Accept my prayer as incense offered to you,
and my upraised hands as an evening offering.
Take control of what I say, O LORD,
and guard my lips.
Don't let me drift toward evil
or take part in acts of wickedness.
Don't let me share in the delicacies
of those who do wrong.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

David's political life ended the same way it began—at war with the Philistines. The first step of his journey to the throne was his battle with Goliath, and as he reached the end of his life's road, he once again found himself entangled in battle with the Philistine giants ([1 Chronicles 20:4–8](#)).



Observation: David's Foolish Decision

As he planned the campaign against the enemy Philistines, David made the surprising decision to take a census of all the people of Israel. The record of David's census is preserved in both [2 Samuel 24](#) and [1 Chronicles 21](#).

As you read these accounts, you will likely notice some differences. But they don't entail contradictions. Think of these parallel narratives as an instant replay—like you're viewing the same event from two angles. For now, focus on the theological theme and emphasis of each account.



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

Rationalization of a Decision—2 Samuel 24:1–9 and 1 Chronicles 21:1–6

According to 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1, who prompted David to take a census of Israel?

2 Samuel 24:1: _____

1 Chronicles 21:1: _____

These verses illustrate the complex outworking of God's plan. Bible scholar, Thomas L. Constable, *explains* four causes in God's decision to enact judgment against Israel. The final and ultimate cause was God. Satan and the Philistines were instrumental causes that incited David's missteps, which was the immediate cause that kickstarted the unfolding of God's decree.

According to 2 Samuel 24:3 and 1 Chronicles 21:3, 6, how did the commander Joab react to David's desire to take the census?

Consequences of Disobedience—2 Samuel 24:10–17 and 1 Chronicles 21:7–17

Soon after the completion of the census, David realized what Joab already knew. The census was a mistake. After David confessed his sin, God offered David three choices for Israel's punishment. According to 2 Samuel 24:12–13 and 1 Chronicles 21:10–12, what options did God give David?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

According to *2 Samuel 24:14–15* and *1 Chronicles 21:13–14*, how did David respond to God? What did God do next?

In a delicate balance of justice and mercy, God personally stopped the carnage afflicting the Israelites. After David witnessed the consequences of his actions, what did he say in *2 Samuel 24:17* and *1 Chronicles 21:17*?

Altar of Deliverance—*2 Samuel 24:18–25* and *1 Chronicles 21:18–30*

According to *2 Samuel 24:18* and *1 Chronicles 21:18*, how did God respond to David's plea?



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

David obeyed God by purchasing land along with animals for sacrifice because he would “not present burnt offerings to the LORD my God that have cost me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). According to 2 Samuel 24:25 and 1 Chronicles 21:26–27, what happened when David offered his sacrifice to God?

Why did David take the census in the first place? First, he was out of touch with the Lord. You will not read of prayer, the seeking of God’s counsel, or the searching of God’s Word for this decision. Second, he was unaccountable to anyone around him. That is a dangerous spot to be in. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Owning Up to Mistakes

Kings and wars and censuses may feel distant. Yet these accounts provide more than mere historical data. Interpretation looks at passages of Scripture to determine timeless theological principles that will nourish the soul of any Christian.¹

When Joab asked why David wanted to take the census, David dodged the question. Why didn’t he answer his trusted friend? What was his hidden motive behind taking the census? Why did his actions enflame God’s wrath? See [Constable’s Notes](https://www.netbible.org/constable) at netbible.org to help you work through these questions.



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

How did David's attitude develop throughout the narrative? What does his example teach about taking responsibility for personal sins and mistakes?

What does this account reveal about God's character?

Throughout David's life, he made mistakes, but God's mercy never ran dry. God's mercy still abounds today, and He freely offers forgiveness to those who seek it. This truth is central to the apostle Paul's discussion of the good news of Jesus Christ in his letter to the Romans.



Correlation: God's Merciful Response

God's forgiveness in this passage offers an opportunity to explore a deep theological question. How could God pardon David's sin and the sins of Israel without compromising His own holiness? Or better yet, how can God pardon *any* sin and remain just? The apostle Paul tackles this question head-on in [Romans 3:21–26](#).



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

Satan's attacks assault more than just spiritual leaders and prominent people. According to [Romans 3:23](#), who is guilty before God? Based on that same verse, what is the ultimate reason for this guilt?

According to [3:22](#), [24–25](#), how does God justify (or declare righteous) guilty sinners? How does this model for salvation prove God to be just, according to [3:26](#)?

How did David's act on the altar at Araunah's threshing floor foreshadow the act of Jesus Christ on the cross? Why was God able to forgive sins before Jesus' crucifixion actually took place?

What a powerful picture of God's grace! It is indeed good news that He offers guilty sinners forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. So what should the forgiven do to overcome sin?



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21



Application: Keeping the Godly from Foolishness

Based on David's example, Pastor Chuck Swindoll offers advice to the godly who seek to avoid making foolish decisions.

First, *find accountability*. David had Joab, but when David misstepped, Joab just watched his friend stray off the path of righteousness rather than guide him back toward the right way. Do you have a network of people who will hold you accountable for your actions—friends who are willing to confront you with courage when you're in the wrong?

Second, *remember sin's consequences*. David built an altar to regularly remind himself of his foolish decision, the frightening consequences, his faith-filled repentance, and God's full forgiveness. What would it look like for you to set up a similar "altar"? How can you tangibly remind yourself of a time when you experienced both sin's consequences and God's mercy?



When the Godly Are Foolish

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21

Third, *take God seriously*. God is holy and righteous and just. This means that sin is wholly incompatible with His nature. Do you view sin as God views it? Does it fill you with alarm? Do you recognize its devastating cost? How can adjusting your perspective of God's character aid you the next time you hear temptation's strong and alluring call?

Sadly, even the godliest of people make foolish decisions and fall off course. But God is merciful, and He lovingly guides His children back on the right path. Learn from David, and in faith, continue running the race God has prepared for you—even if you lose your step.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for showing me mercy in those times I made foolish decisions. Help me look back at these times with a sober mind to remember both the cost of sin and the bounty of Your mercy. Give me the strength to lead a life that glorifies You. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-FOUR

The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29

In the final moments of David's life, he's involved in four activities from which we can learn much. He reflects on the temple, he speaks to his son, he prays before the Lord, and then with the assembly, he rejoices before he passes away.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

SHEPHERD. Musician. Warrior. King. Throughout David's life, he earned each of these titles. Yet one title stands far above the rest. Most importantly, David was *a man after God's own heart*.

Despite his flaws and failures, David's love for God translated into a remarkable legacy. Reflecting on the end of David's life, Pastor Chuck Swindoll writes:

The nation was now unified under one flag. A royal capital had been established in Jerusalem. The military force of Israel was now respected by all the enemies around them, and every enemy had been subdued, including the Philistines. Israel's boundaries had been extended from 6,000 to 60,000 square miles. Prosperity had been brought in by extensive trade routes that [David] had set up. The people hungered for God and righteousness, and the sounds of [his] song could be heard throughout the land. I'd call all that an enviable legacy.¹

In his final days, David set aside time to share advice with Solomon, heir to Israel's throne. While these final words provide counsel on ruling Israel, they more importantly offer wisdom on being a person after God's heart—wisdom any follower of God should seek to receive and apply. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will witness these moments that marked the end of an era.



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1

The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before you read about David preparing the next generation of the people of God, offer to God these words of praise from [Psalm 145:4–7](#) about His faithfulness throughout every generation.

*Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts;
let them proclaim your power.
I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor
and your wonderful miracles.
Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue;
I will proclaim your greatness.
Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness;
they will sing with joy about your righteousness.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

How special are last words! An offering of seasoned advice, a saying of godly wisdom, a heartfelt expression of concern for the future from someone who has lived a long life serving God can be so meaningful. Thankfully, Scripture has preserved King David's last words in [1 Chronicles 28–29](#). Turn there now and read the weighty words of a great man who deeply loved his loyal God.



Observation: An Untired Ruler

According to Pastor Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* method, the first step in understanding and applying the Bible is observing a passage and asking what it says.² As you read the account of David's last words in [1 Chronicles 28–29](#), observe not only David's words but also the *context* in which he said them.



The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29

An Unfulfilled Desire—1 Chronicles 28:1–21

After gathering all his most beloved and trusted soldiers, officials, and family members, David offered one final royal address. According to [1 Chronicles 28:2–3](#), what did David want to do? How did God respond to David's request? What explanation did God offer for His response?

Although God said no to David's request, He said yes to something else—something of eternal significance. According to [28:4](#), what purpose did God have for David?

According to [28:5–6](#), who would ultimately fulfill David's original desire?



The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29

What advice did David offer the entire assembly in [1 Chronicles 28:8](#)? What advice did he offer Solomon specifically in [28:9, 20](#)?

It may very well be that you will die with your deepest desire unfulfilled. And that will be one of the hardest things in the world for you to face and accept. David did a beautiful job of it. He had this deep desire to build the temple, but the Lord's answer was no. And he received this answer with grace. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

An Undivided People—1 Chronicles 29:10–28

Although God had deferred the dream of building the temple to Solomon, David did not grow jealous or embittered against his son. Instead, he offered help by sharing building plans, offering logistical advice, and even supplying building materials. David may not have worshiped in the temple, but it certainly bore his fingerprints long after its completion.

After reviewing the plan for the temple, David's heart overflowed with gratitude toward God, and he put his heart for God on display in one final song of praise. According to [1 Chronicles 29:10–12](#), why did David consider God praiseworthy?



The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29

According to *1 Chronicles 29:13–17*, what would be God's role in the construction of the temple?

David passed on the crown of Israel to his son with honor, and the chronicler honors David saying, "He died at a ripe old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth, and honor" (*29:28*). David's long life has many timeless lessons to teach those who follow God today.



Interpretation: Serving an Unchanging God

Based on the hard-earned lessons David shared in his final address, develop theological principles based on each of the following verses.

Key verse: "Be careful to obey all the commands of the LORD your God" (*1 Chronicles 28:8*).

Principle 1: A person after God's own heart will _____ by _____.



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-FOUR

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1 Chronicles 28–29

Key verse: “And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind” (*1 Chronicles 28:9*).

Principle 2: A person after God’s own heart will _____ by _____.

Key verse: “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don’t be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.” (*28:20*).

Principle 3: A person after God’s own heart will _____ by _____.

Key verse: “Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us” (*29:14*).

Principle 4: A person after God’s own heart will _____ by _____.



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The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29



Correlation: Paul's Final Words

Another person who could easily have earned the title of a man after God's own heart was the apostle Paul. Though he never ruled as a mighty king over Israel, he was a herald of the good news of the kingdom of heaven. In [2 Timothy 4:1–8](#), Paul offered parting words to his protégé Timothy.

According to [4:1–2](#), what was Paul's final command to Timothy? When was Timothy to carry out this command? How was he to do so?

According to [4:3–5](#), what challenges would Timothy face as he carried out this command in the future? Despite these challenges, what hope did Paul offer in [4:6–8](#)?

What parallels do you see between David's final words to his physical son Solomon and Paul's final words to his spiritual son Timothy?



The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29

Preach the Word. Such a simple command can be so difficult to obey. Yet both Paul and David's last words provide advice that every Christian can follow as we seek to determine our place in God's grand plan.



Application: Leading a Life after God's Heart

Based on David's address to Solomon at the end of his life, Pastor Chuck derived four exhortations. This wise counsel applies to followers of Jesus Christ today just as well as they did for Solomon more than three thousand years ago.

1. Know the Lord.
2. Serve the Lord.
3. Seek the Lord.
4. Walk with the Lord.

Of these four application points, which one do you feel you've done well in the recent years? Which one signals an opportunity for growth?

David's life abounded with moral failures. Yet, at the end of his life, he didn't dwell on his regrets. After all, you can't change the past! Instead, he focused on the gracious way God used him despite his brokenness. As you reflect on your life, you may be tempted to miss God's victories for your own failures. In the space below, write about a time God used you for His purposes.



The End of an Era

1 Chronicles 28–29

What has been your biggest takeaway from your study of the life of David? How can you apply this takeaway as you look ahead to the remaining days God has given you on your journey from earth to heaven?

David loved God. He trusted Him. His heart broke over the same things that grieved God. This is what it means to be a person after God's heart. Yes, David committed egregious sins, but he never allowed his own wickedness to eclipse his devotion to His God. His example has shined for thousands of years and continues to light the path of the faithful.

May David's life guide you in your faith journey as you follow hard after Jesus today.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for preserving the account of the life of David in Your Word, and thank You for the ways You have both challenged and encouraged me through his example. Help me imitate David when his heart was near Yours, and strengthen me to avoid stumbling into the same sins that trapped him throughout his life. Ultimately, I ask You to work in me every day to make me a person after Your own heart. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*, Great Lives from God's Word (Dallas: Word, 1997), 292.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-FOUR

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

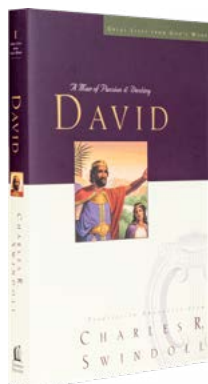
STUDY

The End of an Era

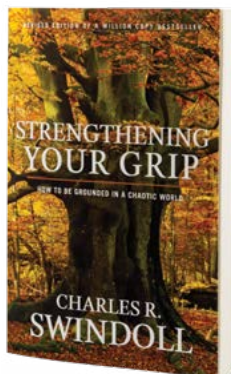
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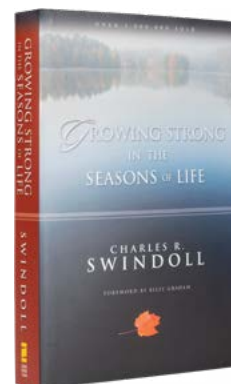
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2022 broadcasts of *David: A Man of Passion & Destiny*, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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