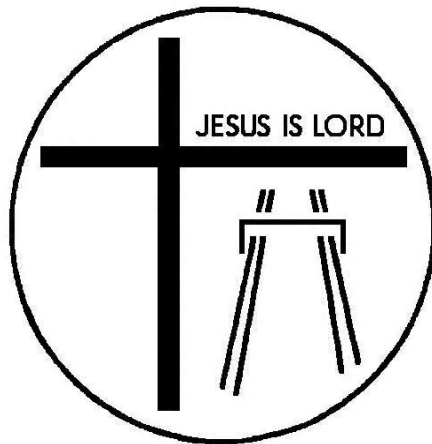


DAVID

A Man After God's Own Heart – Part 1

6 Studies for Home Groups on the life of David



MIDRAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION TO DAVID

The story of David is set at the beginning of a new millennium, at about 1000 B.C. It may seem to us like a very long time ago, in a remote barbaric and unenlightened era, but as we study the life of David and the individuals around him, we will be surprised how little people and their problems have changed in 3000 years.

Israel, after coming out of Egypt under Moses' leadership, and conquering the Promised Land in rather a patch-work way, remained a very loosely organized, tribal nation for 300 years. Ruled by God's law alone, the nation's only leaders were the local Judges or leaders.

Before long, however, the tribes, wanting to be strong and self-sufficient like the nation's that surrounded them, began to clamor for a king. Reluctantly, God gave them their wish and sent Samuel to appoint a king for the people. Samuel selected a strong, handsome young man named Saul. During his forty years as ruler he grew steadily away from the authority of God in his life. Less and less did he lead the people to worship Yahweh and follow God's law.

David's story begins as the young shepherd is called by God, not to be just the people's king, but His king. David's rise to the throne of Israel was full of intrigue, politics, struggles, and hard-learned lessons. David's reign as king of Israel was marked with both exhilarating victory and heart breaking pain.

David knew the delights and difficulties of belonging to God and of being loyal to Him in spite of the pressures of the world. David stumbled in his walk with God and suffered the consequences of his sinfulness, but Scripture recorded 1000 years later that David was a man "after God's own heart," who did all of God's will (Acts 13:22).

David, the song writer of Israel, rejoiced in the Lord of his salvation.

David, the shepherd, united Israel and protected her with diligent care.

David, the king, bowed in obedient submission to the Lord of his life.

David, longing to be like God, made the heart of God his pattern.

GUIDELINES FOR THE GROUP LEADER

1. **Focus on the passage.** Keep the group focused on the Bible passage to be studied. The questions in each study are designed to lead the group to the central themes of each passage.
2. **Encourage all to participate.** Everyone can contribute to the study. The insights gained by individuals should relate to the Bible passage. If a comment or application seems irrelevant, ask “Which verse suggested that idea to you?”
3. **Prepare!** Each study continues the story of David and, therefore, you should be prepared ahead of time to recognize and explain the connections between chapters and studies. Introductory notes are provided in the study, but a review before the group meets is often helpful.
4. **Start and end at the agreed times.** Often many questions are answered as the group moves through the study. To discover David’s character and how he dealt with situations, it is important to complete a study each time the group meets. Going too slowly will discourage most people and the impact of David’s development will tend to be diminished.

5. **Use the map** at the beginning of the study guide to trace David's movements. Pin-pointing the various places David traveled helps alleviate the feelings of being overwhelmed by "all those places with odd names."
6. **Begin with the introduction.** All group members should read this background material to help place the life of David historically. God's revelation of himself to mankind is not a random, fragmented disclosure. God's revelation is a continuous story, and David's life is a significant part of HIS STORY.

STUDY 1

HOW CAN I CHOOSE GOD'S BEST?

1 SAMUEL 16

Setting the Scene:

This chapter introduces us to the successor to Saul, Israel's first king. Saul's life was a story of growing self-will and deliberate disobedience to God. Despite repeated warnings from Samuel, God's prophet during Saul's reign, Saul still insisted on doing things "his way". Though the people had grown discontented under his rule (note the prediction of 1 Samuel 8:10-18), it was his independence which resulted in Saul's final rejection by God (16:1). With the choice of David, it seems as if God was saying to His people, "You've seen the results of *your* choice. Now let's see what happens when *I* choose a king for you."

From the Word:

Read **1 SAMUEL 16**

Looking deeper - A Group Discussion:

1. Contrast the appointment of Saul with the appointment of David (1 Samuel 8:19-22; 16:1).

2. Why was Samuel hesitant to appoint a new king? How did the people react to Samuel's arrival? Why?

3. Who was Eliab? What first impressed Samuel about him? What was God looking for in His king?

4. How clearly did God indicate His choice? How careful was Samuel to obey God? What did God consider in making His choice?

5. Why do you think David's anointing took place "in the presence of his brothers"? (vs 13) What impact do you

think this would have as he continued to live in his father's house?

6. Why had the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul?
What took its place in Saul's life?
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Note: You may wonder how an evil spirit could come from God. There are several possible explanations of this phrase. "Evil", here, may be used in the sense of "troubling". The Wycliffe Bible Commentary suggests that "a gloomy, suspicious melancholy, bordering on madness, affected the mind of Saul. To the Hebrew, every visitation, both of good and evil, was considered to be directly from God".

7. What did Saul's attendants suggest? Why do you think they did not turn to God?
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8. Describe David (vs 18). How would each of these characteristics be important to David's success as king? Which characteristic do you think is the most significant? Why?
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9. Describe Saul and David's initial relationship. Of what significance is this initial relationship to David's future role as king?

Making it relevant - Life Applications

10. Do you actively seek God's will in your life? When He answers and things are going well, do you continue seeking His will?

11. A long time elapsed between David's anointing and his crowning as king. It was a good thing; he had a lot to learn. As you wait for God's purposes to be fulfilled in your life, how can you continue to learn?

12. We saw that David's most important characteristic was that the Lord was with him. How might others describe you as you carry out your every day work and life? Do people recognize that "the Lord is with you"? Why or why not?

13. This study has shown that David was a person “after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22). Think about ways you can become a person “after God’s own heart”.

note: The phrase “after God’s own heart” refers to the fact that David became God’s “kindred spirit”, someone “to God’s liking”, one in whom God found a special affinity or delight.

STUDY 2

HOW DO I FIGHT GOD’S ENEMIES?

1 SAMUEL 17

Setting the Scene:

In this chapter the classic confrontation of the people of God against pagan forces makes for high drama. And David meets his first serious test as God's anointed successor to Saul. Paint the picture in your mind. Note the contrasts - the opposing armies massed for battle but holding back from actual conflict, and the importance of five small, smooth stones and just one "faith-full" young man in God's plan of action.

From the Word:

Read **1 Samuel 17:1-58**

Going deeper - A Group Discussion

1. Discuss the battle scene. Paint a word picture of Goliath. What was his most outstanding characteristic?

2. How did Saul and Israel respond to the giant's challenge? How long did the impasse continue before David's arrival? What effect do you think the continuation of the unanswered challenge would have on the army of Israel?

3. Why was David sent to the battlefield?

4. What incentives were the men of Israel given to kill Goliath? What was David's incentive?

5. How does Eliab react to David's questions? Why?

6. How does David reassure Saul? What reason does he give for such confidence? In spite of his blessing in verse 37, what else did Saul see as essential for winning the battle? Where did *his* confidence lie? Compare Psalm 118:6-9.

7. Contrast David and Goliath in terms of physical size, appearance, weapons, manner, reason for confidence, vulnerability.

8. How was David continuing his development into a man "after God's own heart" in this chapter?

Making it Relevant - Life Applications

9. What causes you to be "dismayed and afraid"? Have you looked at the "giants" in your life so long you can

describe them in detail? What should you do to overcome the paralysis of fear?

10. Earlier we looked at the incentives given to Israel and David to kill Goliath. What are your motives for serving God? (Be honest!)

11. How important are size or other physical qualifications in God's economy (refer back to 7)? Do you feel physically or intellectually inadequate? What have you learned from David about reasons for success or failure? Do people know that you belong to God? How?

12. This story illustrates how God can use simple, "unqualified" people who have faith in him and obey him to achieve the impossible. Do you believe that God can use you to do the impossible? How can God use YOU?

HOW SHOULD I HANDLE MY FEARS?

1 SAMUEL 18, 19

Setting the Scene:

This section is filled with crisis and intense emotions for David. Try to see, in each of these situations, how God was molding and maturing this young man, preparing him for national leadership and spiritual authority.

From the Word:

Read **1 Samuel 18, 19**

Going deeper - A Group Discussion

1. What new relationship enters David's life (verses 1-4)? How might this make things easier for him? How might it also complicate his life?

2. Who are pleased with David's new position and prominence (verses 5, 7, 16)?

3. By contrast, who was displeased with David (verse 8)? Why? What negative emotions begin to grow in Saul (verses 8-9, 15)?

4. How does Saul deal with his fear and insecurity?

5. What character quality does David display in this chapter that is evidence that he is following after God (verses 18, 23)?

6. Saul attempts to kill David through various means. Who helps to protect/save David and how does he escape. To whom did David go in the distress of his escape? Why is this significant?

Making it relevant - Life Applications

7. Discuss how the Christian believer should handle the following realities: 1) personal success prominence, 2) the jealousy of others, 3) fear of reprisal, 4) personal hostility and attack.

8. In question 5 we looked at a character trait that David displayed to show that he is following after God. Do you find it easy or hard to display this quality in your own life?

9. To who do you go, if anyone, in times of crisis or fear?

DO I TRUST GOD WHEN I AM UNDER PRESSURE?

1 SAMUEL 21 AND 22

Setting the Scene:

With this section, we begin to study David's life as a fugitive, being pursued by Saul. David is often driven to extreme measures to stay alive, and in the process he makes some decisions that he later regrets. Note particularly the growth of David's dependence on God for his safety.

From the Word:

Read **1 Samuel 21, 22**

Going deeper – A Group Discussion

1. After being convinced of Saul's intention to kill him (1 Samuel 20:31) where does David go? What are his most practical needs? In what practical ways does Ahimelech help David?

2. What could have been David's motive's for lying to Ahimelech? On whom was David relying for his safety?

3. Gath was a philistine city. Find it on the map. David saw Philistia as a safe area in which to hide from Saul. But David's plan backfired and he began to fear for his safety in Gath. Why? How did David handle this unforeseen situation?

4. David wrote Psalm 56 after escaping from Gath. Read Psalm 56:3. Considering his actions in Nob and Gath, what lesson had David learned?

5. Locate Adullam on your map, in north central Judah. Who joins David at Adullam (1 Sam 22:1)?

Note: The book of Ruth tells the story of David's great-grandmother. Ruth was a Moabitess.

6. Who commanded David to leave the stronghold and return to Judah (1 Sam 22:5)? What authority did he have? Why would this have been a dangerous move? What was God teaching David about real security and obedience?

7. What tragic consequences had resulted from David's "simple" lie in 1 Samuel 21:2ff? Put yourself in David's place - how would you have felt as you made the statement of verse 22? How would this have motivated you to help Abiathar (verse 23)?

8. If David had trusted God, how might these events have been different?

Making it Relevant - Life Applications

9. When you are afraid, what is your typical response? (Be specific and honest!)

10. How do your actions and decisions reflect or fail to reflect your trust in God?

11. Have you ever denied yourself God's direction by taking things into your own hands?

12. When under pressure have you lied or “played a part” to save yourself?

13. How does Psalm 56 reflect David as a man “after God’s own heart” (verse 3, 4, 9, 11, 12)?

HOW DO I MAKE DECISIONS?

1 SAMUEL 23, 24

Setting the Scene:

David and his fellow fugitives continued to evade the revenge of Saul. David was learning to discern and obey God’s will in spite of the obvious pressures of his circumstances and the attitudes of other people.

From the Word:

Read **1 Samuel 23, 24**

As you read, locate each place-name on the study guide map.

Going deeper - A Group Discussion

1. When David was told of the Philistine siege against Keilah, what was his dilemma?

Note: Keilah was a city whose economy was based on the growth and harvesting of grain. It was in Judah, south of Adullam.

2. On what basis did David act against the advice of his men? What promise did God give in verse 4 in addition to his directive in verse 2?
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3. Why did Saul plan to attack David at Keilah (verse 7) and what was David's first response when he heard of Saul's plan (verse 9-12)?
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Note: The origin of the ephod is not certain. It was a loose pouch or small box containing two or three stones or discs. To determine God's will in "yes or no" situations, the stones or discs were flung out and their position interpreted. The Hebrews had an absolute confidence in the sovereignty of God and His control over the casting of these "lots".

4. David and his 600 men escaped to the rocky, cave-pitted wilderness of Ziph. Pin-point it on the map. If you had been David, why would the meeting with Jonathan have been particularly encouraging at this time?
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5. When the Ziphites went to Saul, where were David and his men hiding (1 Sam 23:19)? Identify the area on the map.
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6. How did David's men assess the circumstance of Saul's entering their cave(1 Sam 23:3-4)? What was David's

response to this tempting opportunity? Why didn't he do the "obvious" thing?

Note: Rising 600 feet above the Dead Sea, Engedi was a well-watered rocky bluff, pocketed with vast limestone caves. Saul pursued David there and entered a cave in order to relieve himself. He probably laid his robe aside, thus enabling David to cut off its edge unobserved (1 Sam 23:4). In those times a man's robe was a significant symbol of his person, almost like an extension of himself (see 1 Samuel 18:4). This may account for David's remorseful reaction after cutting the robe (1 Sam 23:5).

7. How did David explain his motives for not killing Saul? What God-like characteristic do you see in David in this incident (1 Sam 23:10)? Observe David's posture and hear the tone of his words in 1 Sam 8-15. How did he view his relationship with Saul? With God?

8. Although David needed to depend on God for guidance and safety, he also needed the support of a human friend. As Christian, where should we expect to find the same kind of mutual encouragement David did?
