

Choices That Matter

Studies from the Life of David (Part 2)

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Foreword

Welcome to this life-enriching seminar for men and women who already know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and others who may be seeking Him.

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Choices that Matter

Studies from the Life of David (Part II)

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Before you begin . . .

David is among the Bible's most loved characters, ranking with Abraham, Moses, and Paul as a champion of faith in the living God.

David's experiences were varied. He was a shepherd on the hills of Judah, a servant in King Saul's palace, a very successful warrior and finally a king. He experienced poverty and wealth, hatred and love, persecution and honor, obscurity and prominence, the depths of sin and the heights of worship. But in every position and condition of life, David knew what it was to trust in the Lord. He poured out his heart to God in praises, thanksgiving, confessions and requests, and many of his prayers were preserved in the Psalms.

As we follow the life of David, we will see his great faith, victories and successes as well as his unfaithfulness, defeats and failures. As we are inspired by his writings, cautioned by his mistakes and instructed by his leadership and service, we will learn how to make the choices that matter as we face issues of life today.

Most importantly, our study will build our knowledge of God, who bids us to trust Him to lead our lives in the best possible way. May the pages of this study encourage you as you discover or rediscover that a loving and faithful heavenly Father does not abandon us when we fail, but rather stands by to use even our failures to bring about our blessing.

Diana Schick
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Lesson 13

NABAL AND ABIGAIL

1 Samuel 25-26

Chapter 25 opens with the death of Samuel, the beloved judge, prophet and priest in Israel. His death marked the end of the era in which God directly led Israel through prophets and judges. The entire nation mourned Samuel's death, and a great assembly of Israelites gathered to perform a memorial service and burial in Ramah.

The account then turns to David and his six hundred men who had moved to the wilderness near Maon and Carmel in southern Judah. David had a difficult task providing food for his six hundred men. They had guarded the enormous herds of a rich man named Nabal in hopes of receiving food in return. When shearing time came, David sent ten of his men to humbly ask for provisions from Nabal in repayment for their services.

Any of Nabal's herdsmen would have testified that David and his men had acted as shields against Amalekites, Philistines and wild animals that threatened Nabal's herds. Even so, Nabal responded to the claims of David's men with disinterest and doubt, and he refused to grant their request for food.

In light of the culture of the time, Nabal's response was unconventional as well as unacceptable. Hospitality was seen as an obligation in the Near East, especially at harvest time, which was the yearly time of generosity and giving.

When David's men returned with Nabal's answer, David's reaction was also ill-advised. In anger, he impetuously gathered four hundred of his men and set out to kill Nabal and his entire household. David's overreaction could have cost him the throne in years to come¹ had not Nabal's beautiful and intelligent wife Abigail taken steps to stop David.

When she heard of the situation, she quickly assembled generous provisions for David and his men and made haste to meet them en route. Upon meeting David, Abigail bowed humbly before him, and then demonstrated brilliant tact as she led David to see God's perspective on the situation. She encouraged David to pay no attention to a foolish man like Nabal. She reminded David that he was destined to be king of Israel,² and that as long as David fought God's battles,³ God would avenge David's enemies. She pleaded with David to accept the provisions she brought for his men and turn from the actions that would only lead to remorse for him later.

David immediately recognized the wisdom in Abigail's appeal. He praised her and thanked God for sending her to avert his foolish course of action. As a result, David and his men turned back, and Abigail went home in peace. Only days later, the Lord brought about Nabal's death of heart failure, and David sent for Abigail to be his wife.⁴

After this, the Ziphites helped Saul and 3,000 of his choice soldiers to go after David once again.⁵ In the dead of night, while God caused a deep sleep to fall over Saul's men, David and Abishai stole into Saul's camp and removed Saul's spear and water jar from beside his head. When David and Abishai reached the outskirts of the camp, David called out to Saul, awakening the entire camp of soldiers. He proceeded to clearly state his innocence of alleged conspiracy against the king, showing the king's spear and water jar as evidence that he had again passed up the opportunity to kill Saul. The king apologized to David, promising never to hunt him down again, and the two men separated for the last time. David had become convinced that only by leaving Israel could he bring an end to Saul's pursuits (27:4).

Read 1 Samuel 25:1-17.

1. How does the author describe Abigail and Nabal (25:2-3)?

2. David had 600 men to feed in the wilderness of Maon in southernmost Judah. He sought to do this by voluntarily protecting Nabal's huge flocks from marauders (Philistines, Amalekites and wild animals), then humbly asking Nabal for food in return.

a. What was Nabal's response (25:10-11)?

Note: Hospitality to fellow countrymen was not optional in the Eastern culture. David had not been obligated to earn the provisions which he asked of Nabal.

b. How did Nabal's servants respond differently to David's request (25:14-17)?

c. What can we learn about David's men here (25:15-16)?

Read 1 Samuel 25:18-31.

3. a. Why was David offended by Nabal's response (25:21)?

b. What was David's plan to seek revenge against Nabal (25:13,22)?

4. Briefly summarize Abigail's immediate response to the situation (25:18-25)? What impresses you about this response?

5. While her husband had pretended not to even know David, Abigail had prophetic understanding of God's plans for his life. With what logic did she try to persuade David to change his course of action? (25:26,28-31)

Read 1 Samuel 25:32-44.

6. a. How did David respond to Abigail's appeal, and what did it show about his character (25:32-35)?

7. Nabal, like Saul, had returned evil for the good David had freely shown. What would Nabal's fate lead David to believe regarding his conflict with Saul (25:36-39a; also 26:10)?

8. Abigail's beauty and wisdom were qualities that made her fit to be a queen. What did David quickly do (25:39b-42)?

Reference: *David's marriages*, Note 4, p. 15.

Read 1 Samuel 26.

9. Who stirred Saul to again pursue David (26:1)?

10. a. What allowed David and Abishai to reach the king (26:12)?

b. How did Abishai and David respond differently to the event?
(26:8-11)

11. What points were made in the conversation that followed?
1 Samuel 26:13-20

1 Samuel 26:22-24

Reference: Note 5, *The story in 1 Samuel 26*, p. 15.

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Dealing With Hostility

Nabal's hostility toward David was passive. He mocked David and left him to starve while he feasted on the profits of David's services. Saul's hostility, on the other hand, was aggressive. Time and again he gathered as many as 3,000 of his best soldiers and unjustifiably pursued the massacre of David and his men.

An abusive and hostile environment is not one in which the human spirit was created to function, whether the abuse is passive or aggressive in nature. The natural responses to the unnerving assaults of another are frustration, confusion, panic and hatred. Unless we are prepared for hostility when it comes, we can easily find ourselves practicing in retaliation the very evil we hate.

The Bible gives us healthy and constructive principles for responding to the evils of hostility. David learned these in his difficult encounters with Saul and Nabal, and we can benefit from them as well. Let's look at some biblical guidelines for dealing with hostility.

1. According to these verses, why was David's hatred toward the hostility he faced a godly attitude?

Proverbs 8:13

Romans 12:9b

2. a. Although David's hatred of the hostility was right, how did he describe himself when he responded wrongly to hostility in Psalm 73:21-22?

b. How can returning hostility for hostility affect us negatively? emotionally:

physically:

spiritually:

c. How can our hostility toward others affect those around us?

3. What perspectives did David find important to maintain in the face of hostility?

Psalm 73:23-28

Psalm 37:8-9

4. In addition, what do these verses suggest as constructive responses to hostility?

Romans 12:17,19

James 1:19-20

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 29:11

Proverbs 22:24-25

5. Often it is necessary to remove ourselves from the hostile situation/person as David had to do. What do the following verses suggest we do as we resist or flee hostility?

James 1:5

Luke 6:28

Proverbs 15:22

1 Chronicles 16:11

6. We need God's help to practice godly principles in dealing with hostility. What power does He promise when we ask?

Romans 8:26a

Philippians 4:13

SUMMARY

7. a. Are you or someone you know in a hostile or abusive environment?

b. How would you summarize the biblical principles to follow in this situation?

8. What does God promise if we seek Him in the face of hostility?

LESSON 13 NOTES

1 *Rumors about David's alleged conspiracy* to the throne of Saul filled the nation. For this reason, David needed to keep a totally innocent record. One violent attack by David on a well-known Judaeen (Nabal) could have cost David the neutral position his fellow tribesmen in Judah had held toward David. After Saul's death, the people of Judah would be the ones to initially establish David as king of Israel. David needed to keep their support if he was to inherit the throne.

2 *The idea that David might be destined to become king* in place of Saul probably had spread among the general populace. Abigail's assessment of David, obviously different from her husband's (25:10-11), was that David was destined to be king (25:28,30).

3 *fights the Lord's battles (25:28).* Abigail knew about David's victories over the Philistines, battles in which David sought to glorify the Lord and protect God's people rather than exalt himself (17:26,45-47; 18:16-17).

4 *David's marriages.* Saul had been cruel enough to give David's wife Michal to someone else in marriage after he forced David from the king's court. David then married Ahinoam, the mother of his first son, Amnon, and later Abigail, the widow of Nabal. One author writes: "It does not seem to have been expected that kings should content themselves with a single wife; even a relatively minor citizen like Samuel's father had had two wives (1:2). Rather, it tends to show how God looked after David's interests. Abigail was a rich widow, we know, and we may surmise that Ahinoam was no less well-to-do. By such marriages David was probably able to afford to maintain his six hundred men with less difficulty than had been the case till now. Perhaps, too, these marriages helped David to forge closer links with the people of Judah. Till quite recent times 'diplomatic' marriages were an important method of establishing and strengthening bonds and alliances between families, clans, tribes and nations." Payne, *1 & 2 Samuel*, p. 134. Scripture is clear on the godly principle of monogamy (Genesis 2:24), however, and while the biblical writer in no way condemns David's polygamous action, some commentators charge David with allowing himself to be corrupted by the customs of the times. (Ex: *Matthew Henry's Commentary in One Volume*, p. 319.)

5 The story in 1 Samuel 26 is so similar to the one in 1 Samuel 24 that some believe it to be the same event. However, the differences are too significant to support such a conclusion. The more probable view is that the biblical writer told both stories in order to clearly show Saul's untrustworthiness and David's complete innocence (although many in Israel would long believe that David was guilty of conspiracy). Above all, the author endeavored to show God's protection of David, His anointed king.

Lesson 14

THE END OF SAUL'S REIGN

1 Samuel 27-31

David had become convinced that Saul's periodic pursuits could last indefinitely, and he and his men were weary of their fugitive existence in Israel. For these reasons, David decided to flee to Philistia again (as in 1 Samuel 21:10-15). There David negotiated with Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, to lease the city of Ziklag in exchange for specific military services against the foes of the Philistines.¹ Because of Saul's renowned hatred of David, Achish believed that David would in fact fight against his own people in Israel. However, while David reported to be carrying out raids on Israelite towns, he was in fact massacring whole towns of Amalekites and other nomadic south of Judah. Because David left no prisoners of war to tell Achish his secret, David succeeded in deceiving Achish and helping Israel at the same time.² This practice allowed David to avoid harming his own people in Israel while he found asylum in Philistia.

When the time came for the Philistine kings to combine forces to fight against Israel at Aphek in the north, King Achish insisted that David and his men join the forces. David appeared to wholeheartedly agree with the plan, but as they traveled north to join the other Philistine forces, the other commanders refused to trust David and demanded that he be sent home.

When David and his men arrived back at Ziklag, they found their city burned and their women and children taken captive by the Amalekites. The men wept bitterly, and David sought the Lord's direction and help. Finding the Amalekites who had taken their families captive was an almost impossible task, but God intervened and led them to a young Egyptian slave who had been abandoned by the Amalekites because of illness. The young man was able to direct them to the exact location of their enemy.

When David and his men arrived, the Amalekites were celebrating their success in the wilderness and were caught totally offguard. Not only were David and his men able to retrieve family and possessions, but they also gained all the plunder from the Amalekite raids on Judah and Philistia. David gave glory to God for the victory and insisted that the spoils from the battle be divided among all 600 of his men and Judeans in various cities who had helped them during their fugitive years.

In the meantime, Saul had panicked as he watched the Philistine armies gathering against Israel. He decided to seek God for direction on how to avert the disaster, but God did not respond. In desperation, Saul sought direction from the deceased prophet Samuel through the help of a medium.³ God somehow allowed the medium to reveal to Saul that he and his sons would die in the next day's battle, Israel would fall to the Philistines, and David would become king in his place. Saul was terrified and too weak to go on. Finally, the medium and Saul's servants convinced him to eat, and he was revived enough to go into battle against the Philistines during the final hours of his life.

The next day, as predicted, all three of Saul's sons and Saul died during the Mt. Gilboa battle against the Philistines. As a result, the terrible foes of God's people once again invaded and occupied the northern towns of Israel. When the Philistines discovered the bodies of Saul and his sons on the battlefield, they inflicted terrible indignities on the corpses. Their gloating lasted only a short time, however, as courageous men from the Israelite town of Jabesh-Gilead retrieved the bodies for burial.

After the defeat at Mt. Gilboa, Israel was once again as it had been at the beginning of Saul's reign. It was obvious that a king who was not faithful to God could not lead Israel in their battles against surrounding enemies. Saul had failed as king, not because of a lack of military or political ability, but because he refused to acknowledge the Lord's leadership of Israel. Even though he determined to seek God in the end, he had already gone his own way for too long, refusing Samuel's instructions and pursuing David against God's will. In the end, Saul and all of Israel had to face the tragic results of his choices.

However, God's plan to redeem Israel through David, a godly king, would not be thwarted. David's tested and faithful generosity, gratitude and good will toward his people set him apart as a man with a heart for God...and God's heart for Israel.

Read 1 Samuel 27:1-28:2.

1. Why did David leave Judah, and what did this reveal about his faith at this point (27:1)?

2. a. What motivated the Philistine king to accommodate David (27:12; 28:1)?

Reference: Note 2, *Military services*, p. 25.

b. What deceit allowed David and his men to thrive in Philistine territory (27:6-28:2)?

Reference: Note 2, *Amalekites*, p. 25.

Read 1 Samuel 28:3-30.

3. What motivated Saul to seek a medium (28:3-7)?

Reference: Note 5, *Mediums, spiritists*, p. 25.

4. What was the response of the medium to the stranger who came to her and why (28:8-12)?

Reference: Note 3, *The witch of Endor*, p. 25.

5. a. What news did Saul receive (28:13-19)?

b. How did Saul respond (28:20-25)?

Read 1 Samuel 29-30.

6. How was David spared military service against Israel (29:1-11)?

7. a. When David returned to Ziklag, what had happened (30:1-5)?

b. How did God respond to David's cry for help and direction (30:6-20)?

8. What did David determine to do with the great plunder (30:21-31)?

Read 1 Samuel 31.

9. a. What was the extent of the Israeli defeat (31:1,7)?

b. What happened to the king of Israel and his sons (31:2-6, 8-13)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Letting God Be God

Saul's downfall depicts the tragic results of rejecting God's guidance. Saul went from impatience to disobedience to open defiance of God's revealed will. As a result, jealous pursuit of an innocent man led Saul to slay eighty-five priests and an entire town of innocent Israelites. Knowing full well God had chosen David to be king (1 Samuel 23:17), Saul persisted in his attempts to kill David in hopes of thwarting God's plan.

Because God could not honor a leader who despised His authority, the small nation of Israel was rendered helpless in the final battle of Saul's reign as king. God's promise to "honor those who honor Him" and "disdain those who despise Him" (1 Samuel 2:30) became a reality: Saul and his sons fell in battle, and Israel lost all the land they had gained over the years of Saul's rule. Saul's entire family and all of Israel paid for Saul's choices to "be god" rather than let "God be God" in his life.

Although we may not rise to the position and fall to the depths that Saul did as a result of his wrong choices, it is easy for anyone to actively or passively dishonor God and His leadership. We can easily choose to "be god" in our own lives rather than let "God be God." Letting God be God means acknowledging Him as the loving and all-powerful Creator and sustainer of the universe and continually choosing to make Him Lord of our everyday existence. As we close Part I of this study, let's look at this most important choice of all.

1. What do these verses stress about God's nature?

1 Chronicles 29:12

Hebrews 4:13

Luke 1:37

Daniel 2:20

Nehemiah 9:6

1 John 4:16

2. No matter how it appears or feels to us, what do these verses claim about God's way?

Psalm 18:30

Psalm 145:17

Isaiah 55:9

3. How is God's will for us described in Romans 12:2?

4. What does the Bible say will result from following our own wisdom before God's?

Romans 1:21-22

Isaiah 5:21

5. Faith in God and His Word is the only requirement in letting God be God. What is faith according to Hebrews 11:1,6?

6. a. What did David's faith continue to bring about in his life?
1 Samuel 17:37

b. According to the following, what does God promise in return for faith in Him?

Isaiah 26:3-4

Isaiah 33:6

Continue to SUMMARY on next page.

SUMMARY

7. Have you ever made a decision to begin letting God lead your life? In relationship to this lesson, what importance does such a decision hold for you and those you touch in your lifetime?

8. a. Is there an area in which you are struggling to let God lead you at this time?

b. What reasons for trusting Him can you see in this lesson, and what benefits could come from trusting Him in this area of your life?

9. As you think back over your study of 1 Samuel, what life choices stand out to you as the most significant you can make?

Continue to NOTES on next page.

LESSON 14 NOTES

1 Military services. “In the ancient Near East, to accept sanctuary in a country involved obligations of military service.”
NIV Study Bible, p. 416.

2 Amalekites, Geshurites and Girzites were nomadic people who raided settled populations, both Philistine and Israelite. Although David led King Achish to believe that he was raiding Israelite towns, he was directing campaigns on these nomadic peoples, leaving no prisoner-of-war to reveal the truth to Achish. Some believe David was conforming to Joshua's righteous action in the conquest of Canaan (cf. Joshua 6:17,21; Leviticus 27:28-29, *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 416). Others believe David was out of fellowship at this time in his life and his actions were grossly sinful.

3 Medium, or the witch of Endor. “The episode has been understood in many different ways, among them the following: 1. God permitted the spirit of Samuel to appear to the woman. 2. The woman had contact with an evil or devilish spirit in the form of Samuel by whom she was deceived and controlled. 3. By using parapsychological powers such as telepathy or clairvoyance, the woman was able to discern Saul's thoughts and picture Samuel in her own mind.” Regardless, the words of Samuel's prophecy of 1 Samuel 15:26-29 were indeed about to come true. *NIV Study Bible*, p. 416.

4 Jabesh-Gilead was a town east of the Jordan River that Saul had rescued early in his reign (see 1 Samuel 11).

5 Mediums, spiritists. Through magic, witchcraft, sorcery, divination, astrology, people have attempted to discover or control the future. Since no power can compete with God, it is harmful to depend on such sources instead of God. Therefore, Scripture forbids these practices that negate God's providence and care. Warnings against: Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Leviticus 19:26,31; 20:6.

DAVID THE KING

Lesson 15

INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of our study, *Choices That Matter: Studies from the Life of David*, was based on the Book of 1 Samuel. We saw that Israel was a nation with a theocratic government in which the people were led directly by God through anointed prophets and judges. But the people grew weary of trusting God to protect them from surrounding enemies and demanded a king as the neighboring nations had to lead them in battle. In spite of God's warnings about the tyrannies of monarchy, the people persisted in their demands and finally were granted their wish. As a result, Israel suffered greatly from the weaknesses of various kings for almost 500 years until the nation's complete downfall in 586 B.C.

The first of these kings was Saul, who proved faithless in his leadership of Israel. When God determined to replace him with David, a "man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14), Saul resisted to the point of convincing much of Israel that David was an evil conspirator. Saul pursued David's life for ten to fifteen years, forcing the young man to live as a fugitive. Although David had two clear opportunities to kill Saul, he refused to harm the king.

Saul had been king of Israel for forty years when he was killed in battle. David was immediately anointed king of his native Judah, the large southern tribe in Israel. Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, remained king over the northern tribes of Israel. After a series of battles, David's forces grew stronger while Ish-Bosheth's diminished. Even though attempts were made to unite Judah and northern Israel peacefully, treachery and murder interrupted the delicate negotiations. Finally, Ish-Bosheth was killed in his bed by two of his own soldiers.

With Ish-Bosheth dead, all of Israel joined David's side. David was thirty-seven years of age and had been king of Judah for seven years

when he was anointed king over all of Israel. His reign over all Israel would last thirty-three years.

David's first act as king of Israel was to capture the fortress city of Jerusalem from a Canaanite tribe and establish a national capital there. The city also became known as the *City of David* or *Zion*.¹ Hiram, king of the Phoenician seaport of Tyre, voluntarily built David's palace in Jerusalem to show his desire for good relationships with Israel.²

David was a fifteen year-old shepherd boy when Samuel anointed him to be the king of Israel. From that time until age thirty-seven when he was finally appointed king by the people of Israel, David had been well-trained for the throne by the many difficulties he had faced. As a shepherd, a young warrior and as a fugitive running from Saul, David had learned to trust the Lord for protection. As the leader of hundreds of distressed outcasts of society (1 Samuel 22:2), David had learned discernment and political savvy. Through mistakes, disappointments and fear, he had learned to trust in the perfect faithfulness and timing of God. With this time of preparation finally behind him, David began his reign as king over Israel.

DAVID RETRIEVES THE ARK

2 Samuel 6

After establishing a national capital at Jerusalem, David moved to fully unify the nation under God by bringing the ark,³ which symbolized God's presence, to the capital city. For sixty years, including the entire reign of Saul, the ark had been resting at Kiriath Jearim near the Philistine border in the home of Abinadab. Now David and 30,000 chosen men of Israel gathered to celebrate as the ark was being transported to Jerusalem.

Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the cart on which the ark was being carried when something happened that halted the celebration. God had commanded that the holy ark only be handled and

carried with shoulder poles by Levitical priests (Numbers 4:15; 1 Chronicles 15:11-15). David, however, decided to adopt the convenient Philistine method of transport (1 Samuel 6:7-8) and commissioned the sons of Abinadab, rather than priests, to move the ark. When the ox stumbled, Uzzah reached out and touched the ark in case it should fall. Because of his irreverence for the holy ordinances that did not permit handling of the ark, Uzzah fell dead. Everyone was shocked at Uzzah's death, and David sent the ark to the nearby home of Obed-edom.

Many explanations have been made for this happening,⁴ but the lesson taken from this unexpected event was that David and the Israelites came to a fresh recognition of the holiness and awesome power of the Lord. Israel, under the reign of faithless Saul, had long abandoned the Scriptures and careful adherence to godly principles. They supposed that God would go along with *their* rules, but Uzzah's death proved that supposition wrong.

In the three months that followed, God brought blessing to the home where David sent the ark. After reminding the people of His authority, the Lord once again confirmed His good will toward Israel. Because of this, David regained courage and brought the ark to Jerusalem, this time in the proper way. There was a great celebration as David and all danced and rejoiced before the Lord.

David's wife Michal, however, rebuked David's actions, though it is uncertain why.⁵ However, her sharp rebuke of the king led to her childlessness (6:23).⁶ David would push away those who did not support the Lord's enthronement in the midst of Israel.

Read 2 Samuel 6:1-11.

1. a. How was the ark transported to Jerusalem (6:3,6)?

Reference: Note 3a-b, *Ark of the Lord's covenant*, p. 35.

b. What brought about Uzzah's death according to 1 Samuel 6:7 and 1 Chronicles 15:11-15?

Reference: Note 4, *Death of Uzzah*, p. 35.

c. What did the people's disregard and/or ignorance about handling and transporting the ark show about their attitudes toward God and His laws at the time?

2. What was David's response to Uzzah's death, and how would you evaluate it (6:8-10)?

Read 2 Samuel 6:12-23.

3. While Uzzah's death was a stark reminder of God's holiness, His blessing on the home of Obed-Edom was a reminder of His love and forgiveness. What hope was rekindled in David and his people (see Psalm 30:5a)?

4. What marked David's actions as he endeavored to move the ark a second time (6:12-15)?

5. How did David show his joy and love for his people (6:16-19)?

6. a. As Saul's daughter and David's wife, how did Michal react to David's actions (6:16,20)?

b. What did David's response show about his attitude toward Michal, God and himself (6:21,22)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Superstition vs. Faith 2

For many years, Israel had been drifting away from God. With Samuel's death and under the ungodly leadership of King Saul, the nation fell to new lows in its spiritual life. For the first years after Saul's death, political factions caused civil war which reflected the pride and selfishness that pervaded the land. Even David went about setting up his new government apart from the Lord's direction. Although Uzzah's death was shocking, it was a righteous judgment by which the Lord graciously brought David and Israel back to God and His blessings.

As we saw in an earlier study, superstition, when it relates to God, is a vague man-made definition of who God is. Transporting the ark with disregard to God's directive clearly reflected the fact that David and his people had fallen away from following God's word and from a knowledge of His divine character. The ark, a religious symbol, and their own rituals, not God's, had become the focus of their worship. Their man-made definition of God made this worship superstition, not true faith.

The choices that are essential to authentic faith involve an accurate picture of who God is and a working knowledge of His principles for our lives. It is easy for us to replace the personal relationship God desires for us with religious activities or man-made rituals. Let's look at the importance of maintaining authentic faith as we seek to know God and His Word.

1. What did Israel's neglect of God's word reveal about their view of God?

2. Beyond reminding Israel of the importance of knowing and following God's word, the story of Uzzah also refreshed the people's knowledge of the holy character of God. As a holy God, His action with Uzzah not only demonstrated justice, but also his love, mercy and faithfulness toward Israel.

a. What truths about God and His word are described in the following?
Numbers 23:19

Psalm 119:89, 90

James 1:17b

b. What truths about God are described in these verses?
Psalm 62:11-12

Revelation 3:19

Micah 7:18

3. a. How were the above attributes of God and His word apparent in the story of Uzzah and the ark?

b. Why are these attributes of God and His word comforting to those who love Him?

4. How can we avoid the mistake of replacing true faith with a man-made perspective of God? What do these verses suggest?

Psalm 119:10-11

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Joshua 1:8

5. The limitless wisdom, love and power of God enable Him to do great things for those who love Him. What does He promise those who seek to know and follow His word?

Romans 8:28

Psalm 18:35-36

Psalm 85:12a

6. Where does a knowledge of the word of God begin according to John 1:1-4,10-14?

7. If we trust Jesus in our daily lives, what does God promise?

Romans 8:1-2

Romans 8:15

Romans 8:31-32,38-39

8. What does Jesus say about directing our spiritual lives (John 15:5)?

SUMMARY

9. As you think back over this lesson, what truths about God's character stand out to you?

10. What sobering warnings are here? What promises?

11. What are you encouraged to do as a result of this lesson?

LESSON 15 NOTES

1 Jerusalem. Certainly one of the most important accomplishments of David's reign was his establishment of the royal city and national capital. Jerusalem had a central location in Israel and was surrounded on three sides by deep valleys, a natural fortress for the city. The City of David occupied 11 or 12 acres of land and could house about 3,500 people. Zion was the name of the southernmost hill of the city, but the name came to be applied to the entire city as it expanded.

2 Hiram king of Tyre. "This Phoenician king was the first to accord the newly established King David international recognition. It was vital to him that he have good relations with the king of Israel since Israel dominated the inland trade routes to Tyre, and Tyre was dependent on Israelite agriculture for much of its food. Tyre was an important Phoenician seaport on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel." *NIV Study Bible*, p. 430.

3a Ark of the Lord's covenant. This was a chest that symbolized the throne of the Lord and held the tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments given to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Ex 20:1-17; 31:18). The ark's elaborate gold cover symbolized God's throne in the midst of Israel. It also represented the atonement God offered to reconcile people to Himself. Golden cherubim on either side of the cover symbolized attendants to the Lord enthroned there. Thus, the ark symbolized God's presence and was present at many of Israel's notable victories.

3b The ark of God was a rectangular box made of acacia wood which measured 4' x 2 1/2' x 2 1/2'. The whole ark was covered with gold and was carried on poles inserted in rings at the four lower corners. The lid, or 'mercy-seat,' was a gold plate surrounded by two cherubs with outspread wings. The ark held two tablets recording the Ten Commandments, a pot of manna and Aaron's rod. The ark was made at Sinai by Bezaleel according to the pattern given to Moses. *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 82. See also, Note 3a, *Ark of the Lord's covenant*, p. 35.

4 *Death of Uzzah.* Some claim that the Old Testament writers invariably saw God's hand in things which we would attribute to natural causes, and claim Uzzah could have died of heart failure when he realized he had touched the ark. (*Payne*, p. 184.) Most feel that violation of the clear instructions that Lord had given for handling the ark brought about the sharp reminder to David and Israel that those "who claim to serve him must acknowledge his rule with absolute seriousness." *NIV Study Bible*, p. 432.

5 "It is not wholly clear why Michal disapproved of what was going on. Obviously her outburst to David was the tip of an iceberg. Perhaps she already felt at odds with her husband, or--more probably--she had some kind of religious objection to the ark's move to Jerusalem..." *Payne*, p. 185.

6 *Michal's barrenness* . Michal, daughter of Saul and wife of David, had no appreciation for the ark's move to Jerusalem and King David's celebration of the event. She "deeply resented David's public display as unworthy of the dignity of a king. [Her childlessness was] probably a punishment for her pride and at the same time another manifestation of God's judgment on the house of Saul." *NIV Study Bible*, p. 432.

Lesson 16

GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

2 Samuel 7

Things had finally settled down for David. He lived in a palace, the Lord had given him rest from his enemies, and the ark was in Jerusalem. It bothered David, however, that he lived in a palace while the ark of God was housed in a tent. Consequently, David called on Nathan the prophet to discuss the possibility of building a temple for the ark.

Nathan's first response was one of encouragement to David, but that night the Lord communicated differently to Nathan. He told the prophet that He had always been pleased for the ark, the symbol of His presence in Israel, to dwell in a tent. He would allow the building of a temple, but one of David's sons, not David, would be responsible for its construction.¹ David would not be disappointed, however, because the Lord proceeded to make an even greater promise to David and to the nation of Israel. He promised to establish the house, or throne, of David forever.² For David, the covenant meant that David's family would indefinitely provide the kings for Israel. For Israel, it meant that God would sustain the nation forever.³

After Nathan shared the prophecy with David, the king responded by spending time alone with the Lord in joyful and sober meditation. David humbly thanked God for the success He had given him and praised God for His goodness and greatness. David also recounted the Lord's past blessings on Israel and acknowledged the blessings He now promised for the future.

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17.

1. What prompted David to want to build a house for the Lord (7:1-2)?

2. What point did the Lord make in His response to the proposal (7:4-7)?

3. 2 Samuel 7:8-16 has been called the Davidic covenant. List one or two promises that the Lord made to David in this covenant (7:11-12, 16).

References: Note 2, *House*, & Note 3, *The Davidic covenant*, p.43-44.

4. Which of David's sons would build the temple (7:12-13, see 1 Kings 5:1-5; 6:11-13)?

5. How do the promises in the Davidic covenant find fulfillment in Jesus Christ according to Luke 1:30-33?

Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29.

6. David was astonished to find God's plans greater than he had imagined. For what does David praise God (7:22-24, 28)?

Reference: Note 4, *God's goodness to Israel*, p. 44.

7. After praising God for His greatness, how would you summarize David's prayer (7:25-26, 28-29)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Following God's Best Plan

Sometimes our plans do not match God's. We may even plan to build a monument for God that He has never asked for. Indeed, our lives can be full of misguided projects. After his experience with the ark, David knew that it was best to put his plans before God *before* moving forward.

Often we set our hearts on a direction that seems best to us, but is not as good as God's best. Seeking God's best plan in every endeavor we undertake is a choice that matters. This choice is called "wisdom" in the Bible and promises successful living. Let's take a closer look at how to seek God's will and the benefits of doing so.

1. How did David benefit from seeking God's will before proceeding with his plan?

2. Can you think of a plan you or someone you know carried out without seeking God's will about it? What may have happened had the Lord's direction been sought before proceeding?

3. What do these verses suggest about actions taken against God's will (i.e. violating a biblical principle or disregarding God's leading)?
Proverbs 21:30

Job 42:2

4. What does the Bible promise when we seek God's wisdom when making our plans?
Proverbs 2:10-12

James 1:5

Jeremiah 33:3

Proverbs 16:3

4. How is God's will described in the following?

Romans 12:2b

Jeremiah 29:11

5. What must we do in order to receive God's best plan?

Proverbs 14:15

Proverbs 18:15

Proverbs 19:20

6. What do these words and actions of Christ imply about the attitude necessary to stay on track with God's best plan?

Matthew 6:10

Matthew 26:39

7. How must we handle God's Word in order to receive His best plan?
Joshua 1:8

Psalm 119:105

Proverbs 30:5-6

8. What attitudes or actions found in the following verses either *hinder* or *help* in receiving God's best?

Proverbs 10:8

Proverbs 13:10

Proverbs 13:20

SUMMARY

9. What benefits of seeking God's direction stand out to you from this lesson?

10. What hindrances to experiencing God's best plan are especially significant to you?

11. a. What plans are you making now, large or small, in which you desire to receive seek God's direction?

b. What can you expect as you seek Him?

LESSON 16 NOTES

1 *David prohibited from building the temple.* 1 Chronicles 22:8 says that David was prohibited from building the temple because he was a man of warfare and bloodshed, but that point is not made here.

2 *House* (1 Samuel 7:5, 11, 13, 16) is used in two ways. The Hebrews word, *bayith*, can be used to refer to a dynasty, as in English (e.g. the House of Windsor, the British royal family), and also to a temple. The theme of the Lord's message to David was: "You are not to build a

house [temple] for God, but he will raise a *house* [everlasting dynasty] for you." Payne, p. 187.

3 *The Davidic covenant.* Two covenants are most important to the Jewish people. The first is the covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19:3-6) when God promised to be their God and to protect and provide for Israel. The second is the covenant made in 2 Samuel 7 to David. Here God made a divine promise to provide His people Israel with the leadership they needed in the person of David and his family after him. David's dynasty would last only 400 years, but the promise to Israel was "forever." After the fall of the dynasty in 587 B.C., the Davidic covenant still served as the basis for fresh promises which looked into the future (see Amos 9:11). The promise that a king of David's line would fulfill God's purposes for Israel was never abrogated, and so held out hope in hard times as they looked forward to the Messiah.

David's descendant long after the fall of his dynasty was Jesus Christ, the Messiah and anointed King, whose reign knows no end. It is no coincidence that the New Testament emphasized that Jesus was "the son of David" (Matthew 1), particularly when speaking to the Jew. Those Jewish people who do not recognize Jesus as Messiah still look to the coming of the Messianic King from the line of David who will again bring security to their people.

4 *God's past goodness to Israel.* In 2 Samuel 7:23-24 David refers to the three great events of Jewish history thus far: the exodus from Egypt, the covenant at Sinai and the conquest of Canaan.

Lesson 17

MEPHIBOSHETH'S STORY

2 Samuel 8-10

Chapters 8 and 10 of 2 Samuel recount how David established Israel as a strong and predominant nation. All of the wars in David's reign are catalogued in chapter 8 as evidence that "the Lord gave David victory everywhere he went" (8:14b). We have no information about how most of these wars began, but it seems David's intentions were the defense and unification of Israel, not the building of an empire. In the case of war with the Philistines, David was not an aggressor in that he was clearing them out of the land of Israel. With regard to the Ammonite king (10:1-17), David was provoked into action. Wars with Aram, Moab and Edom were most likely wars over trade routes that passed through Israel. David's harsh action toward the Moabites, with whom he had previously had good relations (cf. 1 Samuel 22:3-4), must have also been provoked by their hostile action toward Israel.

Chapter 10 recounts the particularly significant and perilous war with Ammon referred to in chapter 8. King Nahash of Ammon had been loyal and kind to David, and when Nahash died, David sent men to convey his sympathy to Nahash's son, Hanun. Hanun's officers convinced Hanun, however, that David was really spying out their land before attacking them. Consequently, Hanun took David's men and shaved off half their beards and cut their robes off at the buttocks, sending them home half naked. Such action was a declaration of war.¹

The Ammonites proceeded to hire 20,000 Syrian (Aramean) warriors to help them fight Israel. David's commander Joab fought the Syrians, and his brother, Abishai, attacked the Ammonites. David personally led the final battle with Syrian troops at Helam where the Israelites defeated additional Syrian troops. As a result, the Syrians were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore, and David's superiority in the area was firmly established.

David also worked to establish Israel from within, "doing what was just and right for all the people" (8:15). In 2 Samuel 8:15-18, the biblical writer describes the development of David's administration as it took full control of the nation's affairs.² Justice was important to David, and he personally administered the law. Zadok, a longtime friend of David, was the chief priest alongside of Abiathar. Together, these men led the nation in worship and religious practice. David appointed his sons as his royal advisers.³

While chapters 8 and 10 recount David's international importance and military prowess, chapter 9 records his tender dealings with the son of his deceased friend, Jonathan. As part of his friendship covenant with Jonathan, David had promised to always be kind to Jonathan's offspring (1 Samuel 20:15-17). In keeping with this promise, David sought out Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet, and brought him to Jerusalem. David presented Mephibosheth with the property of his grandfather, King Saul, and made arrangements for the property's management. David also had Mephibosheth move to Jerusalem where he ate at the king's table for the rest of his life.⁴

Read 2 Samuel 8.

1. a. What surrounding nations did David subdue (8:11b-12)?

b. Israel had been victorious in enormous battles with surrounding nations. What seems to have been David's perspective as he gained success and power (8:6,10b-12,14)?

c. What did David say about Israel's success in Psalm 124?

2. What stands out to you about David's administration in 2 Samuel 8:15-18? How would you describe his reign as king?

Reference: Note 2, *Court History of David*, and Note 3, *David's sons were royal advisers*, p. 53.

Read 2 Samuel 9.

3. Who did David bring to the palace and why (9:1-7)?

4. Most of Saul's family had been enemies of David for many years prior to the death of Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth (2 Samuel 2-4). What might Mephibosheth have felt as he went to meet David (9:7a)?

5. What did David do to honor his promise to Jonathan (9:9-13)?

Read 2 Samuel 10.

6. What thoughtfulness did David seek to show and why (10:1-2a)?

7. What happened to David's men (10:2b-5)?

Reference: Note 1, *declaration of war*, p. 53.

8. Who led Israel in the initial battles (10:7,9-10)?

9. a. Who led Israel in the second battle (10:15-17)?

b. How might David's presence have affected the morale of Israel's soldiers and countrymen?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Keeping Promises

To fully appreciate David's actions with Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, it is helpful to review the relationship David shared with the former crown prince, Jonathan. Because of their mutual faith, David and Saul's oldest son, Jonathan, bonded in a covenant friendship.⁵ Even though David posed a threat to Jonathan's inheriting the throne of his father, Saul, Jonathan felt no jealousy toward David. 1 Samuel 18:3 captured the extent of *Jonathan's* love for David: "And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself." When they both realized David must run from Saul and that they could no longer be in contact with each other, 1 Samuel 20:41 depicted the extent of *David's* love for Jonathan: "Then they kissed each other and wept together--but David wept the most." In the midst of their deep commitment to each other, war had essentially broken out between Jonathan's family and David.

Knowing God's intent to place David on the throne of Israel, Jonathan asked David to make one promise to him: "But show me unflinching kindness like that of the Lord as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family--not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth" (1 Samuel 20:15).

Years after Jonathan's death, David remembered his promise to his covenant friend and kept it. In searching out and bringing the son of Jonathan to his palace, David kept his promise, in spite of the fact that Saul's entire family outside of Jonathan had become David's enemies. For this reason, Mephibosheth was no doubt afraid when David brought him to Jerusalem. However, David calmed Mephibosheth's fears, generously gave him his grandfather Saul's property, and saw to it that Mephibosheth ate at the king's table along with David's own sons. All of Israel saw David pay honor to his beloved friend as he kept his promise to Jonathan years after Jonathan's death.

It is easy to keep promises that bring pleasure. Oftentimes, however, keeping promises can be inconvenient and even painful. Habits such as not being on time, not showing up for meetings, overspending on credit cards or putting aside a promise to a child, spouse or friend are all choices related to keeping promises. These actions can subtly and profoundly color people's perception of our integrity. However, many wonderful qualities are revealed in our character when we make the often hard choices to keep promises. Let's make some observations about the biblical truths related to a choice that matters: keeping promises.

1. a. Can you think of a promise someone made to you that they did not keep? What effect did it have on you?

b. Can you think of a promise someone kept with you? What effect did it have on you?

c. How are relationships affected by unkept or broken promises?

2. a. What types of things keep us from fulfilling promises?

b. What reasons could David have used to justify not keeping his promise to Jonathan?

c. What qualities are required of us if we keep the promises we make?

3. a. Samuel referred to David as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). How do the following verses describe characteristics of God's heart that David emulated by keeping his promise to Jonathan?

**Characteristic of
God**

**How Depicted by
David**

Micah 7:18

Lamentations 3:22,23

Deuteronomy 7:9

Romans 8:32

Job 34:19

James 1:17b

b. Not just in making choices to keep promises, but in all areas of our lives, what are we instructed to do?

Ephesians 5:1-2

4. What do the following verses infer about promises we make to others?

Psalms 15:1,2,4b

Romans 13:8

2 Corinthians 8:21

Psalms 41:12

Proverbs 11:3

SUMMARY

6. What negative habits related to keeping promises would you ask the Lord to help you with from this time forward?

7. Is there a promise you need to follow through with? What qualities mentioned in Question #4 (Building on Basics) above would be involved in your action?

LESSON 17 NOTES

1 *declaration of war* (10:4). In the Eastern world of that time, to touch a man's beard was a most hostile act, and exposure of the buttocks was horrifying in a society somewhat prudish by modern Western standards. Also, to cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks was a customary way of degrading prisoners of war (cf. Isaiah 20:4). David could not ignore such an incident. Payne, p. 201, *NIV Study Bible* p. 437.

2 *Court History of David*. Along with 1 Kings 1:1-2:46, 2 Samuel 8-9 are referred to as the "Court History of David" and have been hailed as one of the finest examples of historical narrative produced in the ancient world. "The intimate and precise detail marks them as the work of an eyewitness." *NIV Study Bible*, p. 436.

3 *David's sons were royal advisers* (8:18). Some translations refer to David's sons as priests, however, this is a puzzling statement (8:18). Since the Hebrew word used can also mean *royal adviser* (as in 20:26), some translators prefer that interpretation. 1 Chronicles 18:17 refers to David's sons as "chief officials at the king's side" which supports the former interpretation.

4 The story of Mephibosheth is often used as a clear picture of God's covenant with Jesus to honor those who believe in Him, in spite of our sin, crippledness and the fact that we were once in the enemy camp. As Christians we are brought from darkness into light, and given "the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

5 *David and Jonathan's friendship.* The following verses recap the major events:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 Samuel 18:1, 3, 4 | Covenant friendship established between Jonathan and David. |
| 1 Samuel 19:1,4-6 | Jonathan's father, King Saul, determined to kill David. Jonathan talked his father out of it. |
| 1 Samuel 19:11,15 | Overcome with jealousy, Saul again decided to kill David. |
| 1 Samuel 20:1-3 | David sought Jonathan's help. |
| 1 Samuel 20:12-13 | Jonathan promised to find out if Saul again intended to kill David. |
| 1 Samuel 20:14-17, 23 | Before parting, Jonathan asked David to promise to always be kind to Jonathan's family (the promise David fulfilled in 2 Samuel 9). |
| 1 Samuel 20:30-34 | Jonathan discerned Saul's intent to kill David. |
| 1 Samuel 20:41-42 | Jonathan informed David and saved his life. Before parting, their covenant promise was reaffirmed. |
| 1 Samuel 23:16-17 | Jonathan went to encourage David, the fugitive. |
| 1 Samuel 31:1-2 | Jonathan's death at the battle of Mount Gilboa. |

Lesson 18

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

While the armies of Israel continued warfare with Ammon, David remained in Jerusalem at the palace. One evening as he walked about on the roof, he saw a beautiful woman bathing. The woman was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of David's choicest soldiers (cf. 2 Samuel 23:8, 39). David had her brought to his palace to lay with her, and she became pregnant.

Trying to conceal his error, David brought Uriah home from the battlefield under the pretense of getting information about the status of the war. David wanted Uriah to sleep with his wife so that all would think Bathsheba's baby was conceived with her husband. However, the plan did not work because Uriah refused to enjoy his wife while his comrades were still in battle.

David finally resorted to sending Uriah back to the battlefield with a note for Joab, the commander of the army. David's note instructed Joab to put Uriah at the fiercest front-line position and withdraw the troops so that he would be killed. David assumed that after Uriah's death, all would believe Bathsheba's baby had been conceived when Uriah was home. When Joab obeyed David's orders, Uriah and several other Israelite soldiers were killed. After Bathsheba's time of mourning, David took her as his wife.

Although pagan kings of the day could practice adultery and murder for selfish ends without confrontation, God's anointed king of Israel could not. God would not bend His laws for anyone, and *especially* not for the king He had placed in power.¹ So it was that about one year later, God commissioned Nathan the prophet to go to David. Nathan told the king a parable about a rich man who had stolen the prized possession from a poor man. Not knowing it was a parable, David became furious at the

injustice of the story. In the heat of the moment, Nathan used the parable to expose David's own wicked actions toward Uriah, a loyal and innocent man.

Nathan went on to tell David about the havoc that would result from his choices.² There would be bloodshed in David's family from that point on, one of his sons would lie with David's wives in broad daylight (cf. 2 Samuel 16:22), and the child Bathsheba had borne David would die.³

David's response was genuine remorse over his sin. But even though God forgave David, the child died. The story reveals the incredible redemption of the Lord, however, as Bathsheba went on to bare David another son named Solomon, a child that God's favor rested on from birth.⁴

God had warned Israel of the results of having an earthly king to replace His personal theocratic leadership of Israel. In 1 Samuel 8, we can read His words through the prophet Samuel. A king would be self-centered and prone to satisfy his own appetites at the expense of ordinary people.

Although David had been very considerate of the people up to this point, even this "man after God's own heart" fell when he trifled with God's laws. At the height of success and prosperity in his reign, David committed both adultery and murder to satisfy his own appetites. The result was the beginnings of rebellion and turmoil throughout the nation.

Read 2 Samuel 11.

1. a. Serious sins usually begin with smaller violations of godly principles. What steps led to David's downfall (11:1-5)?

b. What choices might David have made at any point along the way?

2. How did David try to conceal his wrong choices (11:6-13)? What was the result?

3. a. What vicious steps did David take next (11:14-15)?

b. What was the result (11:16-17)?

4. a. Joab used the news of Uriah's death to eliminate any criticism David might voice about the battle. What was David's attitude toward the news of battle (11:25)?

b. What action did David take thereafter (11:26-27)?

Read II Samuel 12:1-14.

5. Although the parable Nathan told did not parallel the story of David and Uriah exactly, how did the rich man's attitudes correspond to David's (12:1-6)?

6. What reasons did God give regarding why David should have made different choices with Bathsheba (12:7-9)?

Reference: Note 4, *Concubines*, p. 82.

7. What three things did Nathan say would happen as a result of David's actions (10-14)?

Reference: Note 2, *Nathan's prophecy*, p. 63, and Note 3, *Bathsheba's baby's death*, p. 64.

8. a. Examine David's words in 12:13a carefully. What ingredients of repentance are contained there?

b. What resulted (12:13b)?

c. What were the consequences of David and Bathsheba's sin (12:14)?

Reference: Note 3, *Bathsheba's baby's death*, p. 64.

Read 2 Samuel 12:15-25.

9. Even though God did take the child, how did He show graciousness to David and Bathsheba (12:24-25)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Overcoming Temptations

Temptation has been defined as *enticing one to sin against God*. The Bible clearly identifies the sources of temptation as Satan (Genesis 3:1-5)⁵ and our own selfish nature (James 1:13). While God allows our faith to be tested, He does not tempt us to go against His laws for our lives.

Many of us can relate to David. In an idle moment, he decided to satisfy his physical appetite "just this once." The result was deceit, murder and a lifetime of heartache.

Most of our failures to say *no* to temptations will not lead to infamy, as it did for David. Even so, everyone eventually learns that yielding to temptation produces wounds, scars and pain. God's desire is that we successfully deal with temptation. Let's see what the Bible has to say about the choices that lead to overcoming temptation.

1. a. What do you think led to David's fall to temptation?

b. What happened to David because he gave in to temptation?

2. a. What effects can our falling to temptation have on our family, friends or career?

b. What does Proverbs 14:12 suggest?

3. According to the following verses, who is the chief agent in temptation, and how does he get us to fall?

Genesis 3:1

2 Corinthians 11:3

Reference: Note 5, *Satan*, p. 64.

4. What other sources can cause us to be vulnerable to temptation?
Matthew 18:7-9

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Galatians 6:1

1 Timothy 6:9

James 1:14-15

5. How can we fight against temptation?
2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Peter 5:8,9

Ephesians 6:11, 13

Luke 22:40,46

2 Peter 3:17

6. What do these verses promise about God's help in overcoming temptation?

1 Corinthians 10:13

Hebrews 4:14-16

7. a. David finally found peace in the forgiveness of God. What points stands out to you in his prayer in Psalm 51?

b. What did David experience as a result of his confession and repentance?

Psalm 32:1-7

SUMMARY

8. a. What have you observed in this lesson about the results of succumbing to temptation?

b. What choices matter in overcoming temptation?

9. a. Have you had a problem with temptation in a certain area? What perspectives or principles stand out to you from this lesson with regard to this struggle?

b. What comfort do you find in going to God with this struggle?

LESSON 18 NOTES

1 *David was guilty* of breaking the sixth, seventh, ninth and tenth commandments (Exodus 20:13-17). The penalty for adultery in Israel was death for both parties (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22).

2 *Nathan's prophecy* (12:10-12,14). The affliction on David's family should not be seen so much as a punishment inflicted from David's actions as a logical consequence--if the father acts so irresponsibly, it is only natural for the sons to follow the example he has set. Also, the child's death "was a punishment for David, not for the child himself;

death is not invariably seen as a punishment in the Old Testament, though at times it could be." Payne, pp. 208, 211.

3 *Bathsheba's baby's death.* The Bible or Word of God looks at death not as punishment but as a passing into another phase of life--in heaven or hell depending on the earthly choice of the individual. Faith in Jesus assures heaven according to John 11:26, 2 Tim 1:10; 1 Cor 15:54-56.

While some hold David's words in 2 Samuel 12:13 to be a divine promise that all babies who die before the age of making a choice about their eternal destiny (age of accountability) will be in heaven, this is not clearly stated in Scripture. However, death was not a punishment to the baby born to Bathsheba, rather may be seen as a sparing of the tragedy, heartbreak and pain of life. Revelation 14:13 states: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labors." David, therefore, took comfort that God had taken his little one "home" and resigned his baby to the grace of God. Even at such a heart-rending time, David quietly trusted the perfect will of God. Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, p. 185.

4 *God's favor was on Solomon* manifested itself in the fact that He gave him a special name, *Jedidiah* (12:25), meaning *loved by the Lord*.

5 *Satan.* The tempting serpent in Genesis was a manifestation of Satan. The Bible refers to Satan as an angelic being who led a heavenly revolt against God and consequently was cast out of heaven with his rebelling host of angels (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:7-8). Under his leadership, these angelic beings became known as demons, and are very organized in their schemes and attacks on human beings (Ephesians 6:12). Satan and his forces work to get us to worship him (Luke 4:7) and to prevent us from turning to God (Luke 4:8). Satan's defeat is promised in Genesis 3:15 and completed at the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:15). He is still a force to be reckoned with until Christ returns to judge the earth (Matthew 16:27). James 4:7 tells us to resist the devil (or demonic forces) as we continually will God's leadership in our lives. This is what Jesus modeled in His own victory over Satan in Luke 4:1-13.

Lesson 19

AMNON, TAMAR AND ABSALOM

2 Samuel 13-14

David's actions with Bathsheba may have taught his sons to yield to lust and the use of violence for personal satisfaction. 2 Samuel 13 imparts one of the most sordid stories recorded in the Bible. David's eldest son, Amnon, was overtaken with lust for his half-sister Tamar. Consequently, he schemed to rape her, then cast her off. David was furious about Amnon's actions, but apparently did nothing about the situation. In angry retaliation, Tamar's brother, Absalom, had his half-brother Amnon assassinated, then fled from Jerusalem to his grandfather's court in Geshur (3:3b).

David grieved over Absalom's absence every day for three years, while the nation wondered who would succeed David since the crown prince, Absalom, was in exile indefinitely. Finally, David's top military commander, Joab, used a wise woman and a parable¹ to persuade David to pardon Absalom's crime. David allowed Joab to bring the crown prince² back to Jerusalem.

After Absalom's return, David was still torn between the justice due Absalom for murder and his own personal desire to be close to his son again. Consequently, David would not see Absalom after Joab brought him back to Jerusalem. Two years passed, and Absalom tried to get an audience with David through the king's commander, Joab. When Joab refused to cooperate, Absalom burned Joab's field in insistence that the commander do as he wished. He demanded to see his father, David, even if he must die for the murder of his brother as a result (14:32). With this, Joab persuaded David to see Absalom.

So it was that after five years, David and his son Absalom were reunited. Absalom bowed low before his father, and the king greeted his son with a kiss.

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-21.

1. How would you describe Amnon? What might have molded him into this type of person?

2. What was the result of Amnon's selfishness (13:12-21)?

Note: No longer a virgin, Tamar could not be offered by her father to any other potential husband after this incident. *NIV Study Bible*, p. 441.

Read 2 Samuel 13:23-39.

3. Two years later, when David refused an invitation to Absalom's sheep shearing feast, Absalom insisted that the crown prince, Amnon, represent David at the celebration. What action followed (13:28-29)?

4. a. What did Absalom have to do to save his own life (13:34a,38)?

b. What was David's response and dilemma during Absalom's three-year exile (13:39)?

Read 2 Samuel 14:1-22.

5. Briefly describe how Joab manipulated to get Absalom back to Jerusalem.

Reference: Note 1, *Woman of Tekoa*, p. 73.

Read 2 Samuel 14:23-33.

6. Although he longed to see his son, King David was publicly responsible to administer just penalty on Absalom for the murder of Amnon. As a result, what did he do when Absalom returned to Jerusalem (14:24)?

7. How is Absalom described (14:25-27)?

Reference: Note 3, *Absalom's children*, p. 74.

8. a. How was Absalom finally able to get an audience with David (14:28-33)?

b. How did the two men greet each other (14:33)?

9. How does David seem weaker than in the previous years of his reign? To what would you attribute this?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Dealing With Family

Heartache 1: Disappointment & Discouragement

Although David made serious mistakes morally, he repented completely and had restored his relationship to the Lord. The majority of David's life was centered around glorifying God and serving his people fairly. While not much is said about David's feelings about his sons' choices to act apart from the ethics that David espoused, we can assume he experienced deep emotional pain.

The same pain is seen today in the parent whose child chooses different ethical standards. Fear, confusion, anger, disappointment and discouragement can flood one's life when faced with this or other family conflicts. Splits in family relationships can be the most painful.

It is encouraging, however, to know that the Bible offers positive emotional choices in the face of family heartache. Rather than yielding to the debilitating forces of disappointment and discouragement, we can gain new courage. Let's take a look at constructive choices that can lift us up rather than pull us down as we deal with family heartaches.

1. a. What types of family conflicts cause disappointment and discouragement?

b. What other difficult emotional responses can arise in the midst of such conflict?

2. a. What effect can disappointment and discouragement with one person have on other relationships?

b. How did David's response to Amnon affect his family relationships?

3. a. Often parents feel that they are responsible for their children's decisions. Who encouraged Amnon's evil actions (13:2-5)?

b. What can happen when family members choose the wrong friends?

4. Sometimes we try to blame ourselves for another family member's actions *or* blame others for our mistakes. Who is responsible for wrong actions according to the following?

Ezekiel 18:20

Romans 14:12

Proverbs 9:12

5. *Harmful* emotional responses to family conflicts might include fear, anger, embarrassment, self-pity, pride and hatred. What do the following verses suggest as *constructive* emotional choices we can make?

a. Instead of pride and anger:

Proverbs 14:29

Philippians 2:3,4

Romans 12:19,21

b. Instead of impatience:

Romans 12:12

1 Peter 5:6

c. Instead of embarrassment:
Proverbs 2:2; 4:7

Proverbs 12:15

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

6. a. In the face of fear, what is possible?
Isaiah 41:10

Hebrews 12:2a

7. How can we put the person we are concerned about in the Lord's hands?

Luke 6:28

Colossians 3:13

Philippians 4:6

8. As we lean on the Lord in the midst of family heartache, what does the Bible promise we will find?

Philippians 4:7

Romans 5:3-5

SUMMARY

9. a. What family conflicts have caused you disappointment and discouragement recently? What negative emotions have plagued you?

10 a. According to this lesson, what positive responses are possible in your situation?

b. What comfort does your relationship with the Lord offer in the midst of your family conflict?

LESSON 19 NOTES

1 *The woman of Tekoa.* This woman's story portrayed her son and heir as admittedly guilty of manslaughter. But if he paid the normal penalty, capital punishment, she and the immediate family would suffer. They would have to forfeit all of their property to distant heirs. The issue was whether justice for the family did not demand mercy for the wrongdoer. The application to Absalom's situation was that although he had acted wrongly, the nation would suffer if the crown prince received capital punishment or banishment for his crime. Popular opinion was inclined to overlook what Absalom had done to Amnon, considering Amnon's behavior and the national circumstances.

2 *Crown prince Absalom.* Amnon was David's eldest son, and before his death, he was heir to the throne. (David's second son, Kileab, probably died in childhood since he is never mentioned after the 2 Samuel 3:3 record of his birth.) After Amnon's death, Absalom became the eldest son and would be heir to the throne. Consequently, all of Israel was in turmoil during Absalom's exile because they did not know who was the prince of the land.

3 *Absalom's children.* It is stated in 2 Samuel 18:18 that Absalom built a monument for himself because he had no sons to carry on his name. 2 Samuel 14:27 says Absalom had three sons. It seems that these died in infancy or childhood and only Tamar lived to carry on the family name. She married Uriel of Gibeah (2 Chronicles 11:20-22). Their daughter, Maacah, married King Rehoboam and was mother of King Abijam.

Lesson 20

ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY & DEATH

2 Samuel 15-17

After being reinstated into David's court, Absalom proceeded to conspire to take the throne of his father, David, prematurely. Over a four-year period, he secretly undermined his father before the people and campaigned for their allegiance. Then, under the pretense of going to Hebron to worship the Lord, Absalom took 200 naive citizens of Jerusalem with him to Hebron and sent word throughout Israel that at the sound of the trumpet, all should declare "Absalom is king at Hebron!"

When word reached David about Absalom's revolt, he quickly assembled his household and fled from Jerusalem. He left ten concubines behind to keep the palace, the priests Zadok and Abiathar to stay with the ark of God, and his friend, Hushai, to pose as a traitor to David in order to spy out Absalom's plan of attack. David gave Ittai, a new Philistine commander of David's body guard,¹ opportunity to stay in Jerusalem, but Ittai insisted on going with David.

With his group of about 1,000 travelers, David journeyed north through the tribe of Benjamin. As they traveled, they were harassed as a man named Shimei and some other Benjamites hurled insults, rocks and dirt on David and his people. David chose to ignore the assailants who were obviously motivated by fanatical tribalism.² David's tolerance paid off later as Benjamin and Judah were forever bound as allies because of his humble response.

Ahithophel, a wise man who had been David's counselor, had betrayed David to advise Absalom. He counseled Absalom to quickly pursue David and take the king's life while he and his men were exhausted from their flight from Jerusalem. Absalom received conflicting counsel from Hushai (David's friend who posed as a traitor to David) who argued that David was too great a warrior for Absalom's men. He suggested Absalom gather men from all over Israel to pursue and crush David and

his men. Absalom took Hushai's rather than Ahithophel's advice, unknowingly giving David and his men time to rest and prepare for battle.

In the meantime, not knowing whose counsel Absalom would take, Hushai sent the sons of Zadok and Abiathar to tell David to flee across the Jordan. Although by narrow escape, the spies reached David, and the king moved his company across the river. There, a wealthy man named Barzillai along with two other men of Mahanaim³ cared for the needs of David and his people.

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-12.

1. What was Absalom's attitude after David pardoned him? What did he do?

Read 2 Samuel 15:13-37.

2. As an experienced warrior, David knew Jerusalem could be demolished by battle if he remained in the city. What did he do, and why was it such a sad time?

3. Optional question: What did David demonstrate by leaving the ark of God in Jerusalem (15:25-26)?

Read 2 Samuel 16.

4. What did Ziba claim about Mephibosheth (16:1-4)?

Note: The biblical writer seems to believe Ziba's story was a lie designed to obtain Mephibosheth's wealth (cf. 19:24-30).

5. What did Shimei do that David chose to forgive (16:5-13)?

6. Hushai risked his life by entering Absalom's presence. How did he disguise the fact that he was a spy for his friend, David (16:15-19)?

7. a. How did Absalom bring a permanent division between him and his father (16:20-22)?

b. What bitter prophecy did this fulfill (12:11-12)?

Reference: Note 4, *Concubines*, p. 82.

Read 2 Samuel 17.

8. Ahithophel advised Absalom to let him take twelve thousand men and immediately pursue David. They would kill the king while he was still weary from traveling, and the kingdom would be Absalom's.

Hushai (David's friend and a spy to Absalom) advised Absalom to take the time to gather men from all of Israel to pursue and kill David and all his men.

a. What advice did Absalom choose, and why did the author say this happened (17:14)?

b. What prayer had David prayed regarding the advice of Ahithophel (15:31)?

9. a. What did Hushai send word for David to do (17:15-16,21-22)?

10. Ahithophel knew Hushai's advice would lead to Absalom's defeat. What did he do as a result (17:23)?

11. After crossing the Jordan River, how were David and his people cared for (17:27-29)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Dealing with Family Heartache 2: Rejection

1. a. How would you define rejection?

b. How did David suffer rejection?

2. What might have been David's thoughts concerning Absalom's rejection of him?

3. What are some natural debilitating responses to rejection?

4. What positive responses can we choose?

a. When we determine we were in some way in the wrong?

Matthew 5:23, 24

b. When we are faced with unmerited rejection?

1 Peter 3:9

Psalm 37:5-8 (a Psalm of David)

5. What was Jesus Christ's experience with rejection, and what response did He both teach and model?

Isaiah 53:3

Luke 6:28

Luke 23:34

6. Rejection can elicit feelings of abandonment and desperation. What comfort do these biblical promises offer in the face of such feelings?

Deuteronomy 31:6

Philippians 4:19

Proverbs 3:5-6

7. From where does the strength for growth and forgiveness come when we turn to God?

John 14:16-17

Romans 8:26

Philippians 2:13

Galatians 5:22,23,25

8. How was David strengthened as he faced Absalom's rejection?

Psalm 94:18-19

9. It is believed that Psalm 23 was written as David fled from Absalom. In light of this, what impresses you about David's response to rejection?

LESSON 20 NOTES

- 1 *Philistine body guard* (Ittai). "Ancient kings often employed foreign bodyguards, since they were unlikely to be affected by local political considerations or won over by local political factions." Payne, p. 231.
- 2 *Benjamin* was the tribe from which Saul, the king David had replaced, had come.
- 3 *Mahanaim* was the town where Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, had reigned as king of Israel for seven years while David was king of Judah. It is surprising that this town supported David in the revolt.
- 4 *Concubines*. A concubine was a woman lawfully united in marriage in a relation inferior to that of the regular wife. No moral stigma was attached to being a concubine. It was a natural part of a polygamous social system. Concubines were often taken from among Hebrew or foreign slave girls, or Gentile captives, although free Hebrew women might also become concubines. They had no authority in the family or in household affairs. The children were regarded as legitimate, although the children of the first wife were preferred in the distribution of the inheritance. Concubinage in biblical times was initially born out of the problem of barrenness of a man's lawful wife. Sarah herself suggested that Abraham have a child by her maidservant. Prominent Old Testament figures who had concubines were Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Saul, David, Solomon, Caleb, Manasseh, Rehoboam and Abijah. *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, p. 180. Kings often inherited the concubines of the former king, which suggests David inherited Saul's concubines.

Commentators differ on the biblical perspective on concubines. Some suggest that the law of Moses assumed and provided for concubines in Exodus 21:7-11 and Deuteronomy 21:10-14. Others hold the belief that God intended for a man to have only one wife, as in Genesis 2:24. This view would say that when the Israelites adopted the practice of concubinage, it was a manifestation of their assimilation into the pagan cultures of the day.

Lesson 21

DAVID GRIEVES A SON'S DEATH

2 Samuel 18-20

When Absalom pursued his father David, 20,000 men died in the forest of Ephraim in a bloody civil war. Even though David had asked that his son Absalom be captured rather than killed, Joab seized the opportunity to kill Absalom, and the battle was over. Runners took the news to David in Mahanaim where he had been instructed to remain for protection.

Upon receiving the news of his son's death, David was overcome with grief. Rather than welcome his men back to the city, he wept and cried out for Absalom. The good news for the nation and for David as king was overshadowed by David's grief as a father. Harsh words from Joab brought David to his senses, and he went out to show appreciation to the loyal soldiers who had risked their lives in battle that day.

Although Absalom's revolt died along with its leader, the country would only slowly be restored to David's control. David did not go to Jerusalem right away, but waited until he had been invited to return to the throne. Although most of Israel was ready to hail David king, the tribe of Judah lagged behind, possibly out of fear, since they had been chief supporters of Absalom. David sent friendly word to the people of Judah to ask why they had not joined others in wishing his return to the throne. He reminded them of the close relationship he had previously shared with them, and David even went so far as to invite Absalom's former commander Amasa to replace Joab as his highest military commander.¹

When Judah gave their consent to David's kingship, however, the rest of Israel was jealous because they had not received equal treatment by David. It was then that a man named Sheba seized the moment to start another revolt against David (2 Samuel 19:41-20:26). This was short-lived, however, and David was again established in Jerusalem as the king of Israel.

Read 2 Samuel 18:1-18.

1. a. What did David do with his army (18:1-2)?

b. What were his commands as they departed for battle (18:5)?

2. a. Briefly describe the war (18:6-8).

b. Why was Joab's dealing with Absalom in 2 Samuel 18:9-17 probably the wisest choice?

3. What did the monument Absalom had erected reveal about his character (18:18)?

Read 2 Samuel 18:19-33.

4. a. What do you think David felt as he awaited news of the battle?

b. What was David's response to news of Absalom's death (18:29-33)?

c. Why might David have been so grieved at the death of Absalom?

Read 2 Samuel 19:1-8.

5. a. What resulted from David's response to Absalom's death (19:2-4)?

b. What did Joab force David to acknowledge (19:5-8)?

Read 2 Samuel 19:9-30.

6. Whom did David forgive in this section?

2 Samuel 19:11-15 (17:25-26)

2 Samuel 19:16-23 (16:5-6)

Reference: Note 2, *David's gracious dealings*, p. 91.

Read 2 Samuel 19:31-40.

7. a. Why did David appreciate Barzillai so much (19:32)?

b. What offer did David make that Barzillai rejected (19:33-39)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Dealing with Family Heartache 3: Losses

It is difficult to imagine the pain David must have felt when he heard about the death of his son. Absalom died fighting to kill his own father, and the civil war he spurned had divided the nation of Israel. David's grieving process was curtailed by his need to show appreciation to his troops and pull the country back together.

Time heals some losses of our lives, but other losses leave deep wounds. There are no shortcuts or easy answers, but the Lord promises to be near, to redeem the pain and to heal the brokenhearted who turn to Him.

In her booklet, *Facing the Death of Someone You Love*, Elisabeth Elliot shares principles that helped her through the deaths of two husbands. She states that six things, "if done in faith, can be the way to

resurrection: be still and know, give thanks, refuse self-pity, accept the loneliness, offer it to God, turn your energies toward the satisfaction not of your own needs but of others."

As we look at biblical principles that can support us during a time of loss, we will refer to verses that support Elisabeth's statement.

1. What can happen to us emotionally if we turn from the Lord in times of loss? What have you or those you know experienced?

2. a. What does the Bible encourage us to *do* and to *recognize* in Psalm 46:10a, 11?

b. How can regular quiet time with God help when we are experiencing loss?

3. What can we do during these quiet times with the Lord?
Psalm 62:8

Psalm 34:1

Isaiah 40:31

c. How does the Lord respond when we come to Him with loss?
Isaiah 40:28-29

Psalm 34:18

3. Although we are *never* commanded to be thankful for hurt others experience (cf. Micah 6:8), it is important to choose to sustain a thankful heart toward God in the midst of heartache. Regardless of feelings, a thankful heart expresses continued faith in God's goodness and allows God to supernaturally strengthen us. For what was David thankful during times of grief?

Psalm 63:1-3, 6-8

Psalm 68:19-20

Psalm 23:4,6

4. What does the Lord promise when we lean on Him in times of loss?
Matthew 11:28-30

John 14:27

5. What does 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 infer about helping others during times of grief?

6. How are we helped by reaching out to others during our grief?
Isaiah 58:10

Luke 6:38

Proverbs 11:25

7 If we continue to walk with the Lord, of what can we be sure in the loneliness of a loss?

Isaiah 54:10

1 Peter 5:10

Philippians 4:19

SUMMARY

8. Have you faced a family loss in recent days or years? Which of the principles discussed in this lesson have helped you during this time?

9. a. What choices can we decide in advance to make when our path leads us through grief over the loss of a loved one?

b. What truths from this lesson are most valuable to you?

LESSON 21 NOTES

1 *Amasa*, Absalom's commander, was allowed to take position over Joab, David's loyal top military commander. This was a diplomatic move on David's part designed to win back Judah's allegiance. Joab was probably not on good terms with David after disregarding the king's authority. First, Joab had murdered Saul's former commander Abner against David's wishes (2 Samuel 3:27f). Then Joab disregarded David's orders not to kill Absalom. However, Joab still had military leadership after Amasa's appointment (cf. 20:7), and soon killed Amasa to take back his position (20:8-10).

2 *David's gracious dealings* with Shimei, Mephibosheth and Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, were wise diplomatic moves by David. His graciousness helped to heal poor relations between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Saul's tribe). As a result, when the kingdom of Israel split after the reign of David's son Solomon (930 B.C.), Benjamin remained with Judah to form the southern kingdom known as Judah.

Lesson 22

TEMPLE PLANS

1 Chronicles 22,28

To finish the life of David study, we'll move to the book of 1 Chronicles. Some years before the end of David's reign over Israel, he took a census of the people. Although it is unclear why, this act was considered evil by everyone, including Joab, David's military commander.

The census amounted to a counting or drafting of fighting men. Most think David's action signified that he had become proud of his achievements as king and dependent upon numbers instead of God for strength.¹

At any rate, as a result of David's pride and the people's mounting offenses against God,² a plague struck the land (1 Chronicles 21). David humbly repented before the Lord and bought the threshing floor of Araunah, north of Jerusalem, to build an altar of sacrifice for his sin. David determined that this place would become the site of the temple of the Lord.³

After the incident of the census, David's heart turned completely toward worshipping God through the building of the temple. Although it was David's desire to build the temple himself, the Lord denied him the privilege because he had been a man of war and bloodshed since his youth. God had informed David that his son Solomon (2 Samuel 12:24), a man of peace, would build the temple.

Because Solomon was very young⁴ David prepared everything in advance for the building project. This would allow the construction to get underway immediately when Solomon became king. David gave massive amounts of gold, silver, bronze, wood and stone from his own wealth and from the wealth of the kingdom toward the project. He provided detailed and exact plans and provisions for the structure. Then he charged Solomon to faithfully carry out the task God had appointed him to do.

David rallied all Israel to give free-will offerings toward the temple and to wholeheartedly support Solomon in his undertaking. Everyone responded with great zeal, and David rejoiced in their willingness to give.

As the time drew nearer to his death, David assembled the leaders of Israel and addressed them with respect and tenderness. He announced the God-ordained succession of his son Solomon to the throne and to the task of building the temple in Jerusalem. David charged them as leaders to seek and serve the Lord and to be careful to follow His laws in the Scriptures.

David instructed his son Solomon to be a man of integrity before God, who sees the hearts and motives of kings. Solomon would need to maintain a pure heart in order to complete the sacred tasks of building the temple and leading Israel. With this said, David encouraged Solomon to move forward with the good men who were ready and organized to help with the task.

Read 1 Chronicles 22.

1. Why did God not allow David to build the temple (22:6-8)?
2. What did God promise would be true of Solomon's reign (22:9-10)?

Reference: *throne forever*. See Note 3, *The Davidic covenant*, p. 44.

3. a. What did David wish for his son Solomon (22:11-12)?

b. What did David warn Solomon that he must do to be successful. as Israel's king (22:13)?

4. What did David do to help Solomon build the temple, and why did he take such action (22:5, 14-17)?

Reference: Note 4, *Solomon's age*, p. 101.

5. a. Of what did David remind the leaders of Israel (22:18)?

b. What did David charge them to do (22:19)?

Read 1 Chronicles 28.

6. How would you describe David's address to the leaders of Israel and his household (28:2-3)?

7. a. Of what did David inform them (28:4-7)?

b. What did he charge them to do (28:8)?

8. a. What did David present to Solomon (28:11-19)?

b. From where did he get the plans (28:12,19)?

9. What was David's final counsel to Solomon (28:9-10, 20)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Security for Life

We all have a natural longing for security. In the midst of life's storms, we yearn for protection, safety, sanctuary and freedom from danger. Where can we find solid security amidst the uncertainties and changes we endure?

As David approached the end of his days, his actions and words represented the convictions learned over a lifetime. This man, who had experienced being shepherd and king, fugitive and nobleman, sinner and saint, had learned the only true source of security. As we near completion of our study on David, we will look at the choices that matter in experiencing this security that withstands the storms of life.

1. How would you describe the feelings that come from insecurity?

2. What situations foster feelings of insecurity?

3. a. Apart from the Lord, what are some ways that people seek security?

b. What did you discover?

4. The Bible often warns that we cannot find lasting security apart from God. What do these verses suggest to be false sources of security?

Proverbs 28:26

Proverbs 18:11

Jeremiah 17:5

5. What do these verses promise the person who finds security in trusting the Lord and following godly principles?

Psalm 112:1,7

Psalm 91:1

Proverbs 3:23-24

Hebrews 13:6

6. a. What truths about God and His word must we continually remember in order to experience the security He gives?

Deuteronomy 32:4

Isaiah 26:4

Hebrews 4:14-16

Psalm 19:7-11

b. What security is found in the following verses?

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:31-32

Romans 8:34

Romans 8:35, 38-39

8. a. David knew that Solomon and the people of Israel could be sidetracked from serving the Lord. His advice to them is paralleled by these New Testament references. What do they say we must do to find security as we serve the Lord with our lives?
Matthew 7:24-27

Matthew 6:31-33

1 Corinthians 15:58

b. How did David practice these principles at the end of his life?

SUMMARY

9. a. Are there any areas of your life in which you feel insecure?

b. What false securities, if any, do you tend to drift toward at times?

c. What principles in this lesson help you to experience security in the midst of your situation?

LESSON 22 NOTES

1 David's *census*. a. Most commentators believe that David's census, a draft registration, was designed to enable David to measure his strength as well as gain greater power by building his army. David seemed to have become proud of his military and economic achievements and had begun to put his trust in armaments and troops rather than in the Lord who had brought about David's success.

b. 2 Samuel 24:1 states that the Lord was angry with Israel and incited David to take a census of the people. 1 Chronicles 21:1, on the other hand, states that Satan incited David to take a census of the people. The two statements can be reconciled by remembering that in Hebrew thinking everything that God permits to happen is attributed to God's agency. The Lord allowed or somehow encouraged David to go ahead and do what David had already wanted to do, i.e. measure and build his own power. This explanation of 1 Samuel 24:1 is supported by the fact that: (1) Joab and his commanders warned David that taking the census would be wrong in God's sight (2 Samuel 24:3,4; 1 Chronicles 21:3). It seems that the Lord gave David a warning through Joab to reverse his decision. (2) David recognized and took responsibility for his sinful choice (24:10). (3) The people closest to the situation (David, Joab, Gad, the biblical writer) did not seem to think God's actions were unjust toward David. (4) Biblically, God does not author what he disapproves of and commands us to stand against (James 1:13).

c. 1 Chronicles 21 states that Satan also moved David to conduct the census. Rarely does Satan purpose what God does. However, when this happens biblically, God's purpose is always for the good of mankind

while Satan's is for the destruction of mankind. As we can see in the cases of Job, the persecution of Christians (1 Peter 4:19, 5:8) or the crucifixion of Christ through Judas (John 13:27), God's design in each incident is to redeem, purify and strengthen faith through suffering while Satan's design is always malicious. This was also true of David's census-taking. God allowed it in order to bring David and the people of Israel back to pure faith, a faith which is apparent in 1 Chronicles 23-29. Satan's purpose was to destroy many lives. For further study on this passage, see *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., pp. 129-132, and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Archer, pp. 186-188.

2 *The people's offenses.* 2 Samuel 24:1 suggests that the people of Israel seemed guilty of pride and dependence on their own strength alongside of David. It also suggests that there were many national offenses. In the end, all learned to humbly depend on the Lord, not on themselves, for strength.

3 *The temple* that would be built on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem would become a sacred focal point for Judeo-Christian faith and prophecies. The story of the plague, therefore, is very significant as it traces the purchase of the property for the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. This was also the location where God had stayed the hand of Abraham from killing his son Isaac (Genesis 22).

4 *Solomon's age* at the time he became king is not known with certainty. He came to the throne in 970 B.C. and was likely born about 991. This would make him 21 years old when he took the throne. *NIV Study Bible*, p. 613.

Lesson 23

DAVID'S FINAL WORDS

1 Chronicles 29

David and the leaders of Israel contributed massive amounts of gold, silver, bronze, precious stones and other materials for the building of the temple in Jerusalem. Everyone rejoiced in the wholehearted giving of Israel's leaders as they provided for the structure that would forever proclaim the God of Israel to the world.

David praised God before the people, declaring His greatness, power, glory, victory, majesty and sovereignty. Acknowledging the fact that God had enabled them to give so generously toward the work of the temple, David prayed that the people would continue in faithfulness and that Solomon would be a righteous king over Israel. The entire assembly praised God together, and with feasting and rejoicing, they anointed Solomon as king. Because of God's grace, Solomon's reign would be the most spectacular that Israel had ever known.

David's death came some time after Solomon took the throne. David had reigned forty years in Israel, seven at Hebron over the tribe of Judah and thirty-three in Jerusalem over all Israel. Even though he had been a warrior from his youth, God had preserved his life, giving him a long life, riches and honor.

Read 1 Chronicles 29.

1. a. How did David persuade the leaders of Israel to give toward the temple building project (29:1-5a)?

b. What did he ask them to do first (29:5b)?

c. What was the result (29:6-9)?

2. a. How did David describe God in the praise portion of his prayer before the assembly (29:10-13)?

b. What did David's prayer encourage the people to realize about their giving (29:14-16)?

3. a. What did David pray would continue (29:17-18)?

b. What did David pray for his son (29:19)?

4. What was David's last act of leadership over his people (29:20)?

5. a. How did Solomon's reign begin (29:21-24)?

b. What would characterize Solomon's reign (29:25)?

6. a. How long had David ruled in Israel (29:26-27)?

b. How was he described at his death (29:28)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Philosophy for Life

Inherent in human nature is a need to seek purpose and meaning in life. Eventually, we are all compelled to establish a philosophy of life -- a view of ourselves, God and the world -- that gives life purpose and meaning.

The Christian believes that purpose and meaning are found only as one establishes a *personal* relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. This relationship between creature and Creator allows one to both grow in a knowledge of his Maker as well as become the person God created him to be.

David's life was riddled with struggles, mistakes and heartaches. Yet throughout his experience, David's clear philosophy of life allowed him to continually find fulfillment in serving the Lord, God's people and God's purposes. As a result, David left the people of Israel praising God at the end of his reign. In addition, millions of believers through the ages have praised God and found comfort through the many Psalms David penned as a "man after God's own heart."

What is your philosophy of life? How do you view yourself, God and the world? In spite of mistakes and hardships, what philosophy of life can allow you to find purpose and meaning throughout your days as well as leave a godly heritage behind? As we close our study of his life, we will look at the choices that matter in answering these most important questions.

1. When do people begin thinking about meaning and purpose in life?

2. What confusion about life do you see in the world around you? What results from this confusion?

3. Read Psalm 139. What does David encourage us to believe about:
 - a. God's knowledge of us? Psalm 139:1-6

b. God's presence and guidance for those who trust Him?
Psalm 139:7-12)?

4. a. What did David believe about God's creation of an individual according to Psalm 139:13-15? Where does God's care begin?

b. What did David state about God's knowledge of our lives?
Psalm 139:16

5. How did David describe God's attentiveness?
Psalm 139:17-18

6. What does such a view of oneself and God produce in a person's life?

7. Whom did David set himself against?
Psalm 139:19-22

8. What would David encourage us to trust God to do?
Psalm 139:23-24

9. a. What ultimate definition of purpose and meaning in life did David express in Psalm 139:24b?

b. What does this mean to you?

10. a. As David knew all too well, fulfillment in life cannot be experienced apart from freedom from guilt. What brought a halt to David's fulfillment, and how did he learn to find relief?
Psalm 32:1-5

11. David put faith in the forgiveness of the Lord and the Old Testament blood sacrifices (Leviticus 17:11) to find cleansing from sin. Basic to the biblical philosophy of life is atonement for sin. How were the blood sacrifices that brought forgiveness of sin in the Old Testament perfectly realized in the New Testament?
Isaiah 53:3-12 (Old Testament prophecy about Christ)

Romans 3:22-25a

1 John 1:7,9

c. How is the fulfillment that comes from faith in the Lord described in the following?

John 10:10b (Jesus speaking)

Ephesians 2:10

John 3:16

1 Samuel 2:30

SUMMARY

12. David's life was full and meaningful. How would you summarize the philosophy of life that kept him focused to the end?

13. a. What part does freedom from guilt play in your own fulfillment?

b. What simple way of forgiveness did the Lord Jesus provide for us?*

How has knowing His forgiveness helped you know true fulfillment?

14. a. As you think back over your study of David's life, what choices stand out to you as ones that matter the most?

b. You may want to take a moment to thank the Lord for leading you in discovering or rediscovering these truths for abundant living.

**If you have never made an adult decision to put your faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin, the following prayer may be helpful to you.*

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that my sin has separated me from you. I believe that you paid the penalty for all my sins when you died on the cross. I now receive the complete forgiveness that you offer. Take control of my life and make me the person you created me to be. Amen.

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**CHOICES THAT MATTER
STUDIES FROM THE LIFE OF DAVID**

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