

The United Kingdom

1 Samuel 1 – 1 Kings 11

Timely Lessons from Kings Saul,
David, and Solomon

Notes and Comments by John Sullivan

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Moline, IL
www.d4yp.com

The United Kingdom

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The United Kingdom

1 Samuel 1 – 1 Kings 11

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References

I know, you barely have time to read the Bible and pray every day, right? But I also know you want to be an honest-to-goodness student of God and his word. So, you need to try to invest as much time as you can, whenever you can, digging deeply into your study. Here are just a few resources that can help. Some of them are free, but don't hesitate to invest some money into your study as well. You won't regret the time, effort, or expense you put into it. (J.S.)

1. *Halley's Bible Handbook*

One of the oldest single-volume Bible handbooks still popular today, this colorful, easy-to-understand, and convenient-to-use reference is helpful in this and every study we do of God's word. It's fun to use, as well!

2. *The Transforming Word*

This one-volume commentary is edited by Mark Hamilton. It is much more scholarly and in-depth than the one mentioned above and is a wealth of information about the whole Bible. The articles on *1 Samuel*, *2 Samuel*, and *1 Kings* are particularly helpful in this study.

3. Bible Maps and Timeline Charts

If you're really going to study the history books of the Bible, you have to have good maps and timeline charts! Many study Bibles and reference materials like the ones listed above have good maps of Israel during the United Kingdom. You can also use Google search images to find your own map to print out during this study. Look for maps of "*Israel during the time of David*" or "*Israel during the United Kingdom*," etc. *Manna Bible Maps* at biblemaps.com is an excellent resource. Likewise, you can use Google search for many valuable timeline charts of Bible history.

4. www.gotquestions.org

This is a very helpful website for many studies of the Bible. For instance, type in "*high places*" in the search area and get an explanation of what those were in the days of the United Kingdom, why they were not always bad and why they sometimes were.

5. Video: "*Solomon's Temple Explained*"

Go to YouTube and type in "*Solomon's Temple Explained*" to see a very interesting 10-minute video on the tabernacle that Moses built and the temple that Solomon built. You can also use Google research to see images of the many temple and tabernacle models that have been built based on the Scriptures describing them.

Conclusion

What's on God's Heart? What's In Your Heart?

The commercials for the Capital One credit card want you to focus on "What's in your wallet?" But God wants you to focus on "What's in your heart?"

*The LORD does not look at the things people look at.
People look at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.*

1 Samuel 16:7b

Saul, David, and Solomon were the kings of Israel during the approximately 120 years known as the United Kingdom, some 1000 years before Christ. This 6-week study will examine their life stories as found in *1 Samuel 1* through *1 Kings 11*. These books are a part of the 12-book section of the Bible known as *History*. More than just an interesting study of history, though, the lives of these kings give us great insight into God's heart and his view of the human heart. In other words, as always, this study is an opportunity to know the Bible better and to know God better.

Each week, we will focus on one of the following six attributes of God:

(1) God the Rock

Times are tough today, no doubt about it. They were tough 3000 years ago also. Leaders then and leaders today are not always consistent or trustworthy. They do not always inspire confidence. But God is rock solid! We need that knowledge of God so much.

(2) The God of Your Heart

King Saul had to learn the hard way that God focused on the heart, not just the actions, when he was told that "*to obey is better than sacrifice*." A little later, when David was chosen to be the next king, God pointed out his emphasis on the heart, as stated in the verse quoted above.

(3) The God of Your Battles

Just as it was tempting to God's people then, it is tempting today to want to take things into our own hands and especially control the timing of everything. King David bravely told Goliath that the battle belongs to God, but he could tell us today how hard it is to continually live by that conviction.

(4) The God of Grace

The Bible never spares describing the sins of our heroes of faith. That's certainly true of David. But Scripture also goes into detail about how God goes to great lengths to show grace to those who are willing, like David was, to receive it.

(continued on the next page)

(5) The God of Your Tough Times

In tough times we need strong hearts. When Satan steps up his accusing tactics, as he did with David, we need God to remind us that, with his help, we can face even the most difficult situations.

(6) The God in Your Temple

When King Solomon built the beautiful physical temple almost 3000 years ago, God told him that his eyes and heart would be there. Today, we are God's temple. We are inspired by the fact that he is always living in us, his temple.

Knowing these Scriptures can help us know God's heart better. At the same time, we can focus on the all-important question: "what's in your heart?" Some people may view that as a very threatening question. Surely, God is trying to make us realize how terrible we are, right? That way, he can keep us under his control. If that is the way we view God, we seriously misunderstand him.

While it is true that God has a higher standard about sin than we do, it is also true that he doesn't judge us from outward appearances. We are the ones that focus on records of performance and behavior modification, which are really just attempts to make us look good. His focus is on the heart.

These three kings all actually had some of the same sin patterns. But only one (David) is called the "man after God's own heart." One of the reasons for that can be found in the way he viewed God. When God looked at him, he did not see a perfectly sinless man. Far from it. But he did see a man whose heart was centered on him. When he fell off of that focus (and he often did), he owned his sin and returned to the God-centered direction.

So, I hope that you and I will always approach this question of "what's in your heart?", in the positive and faithful way David did:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalms 139:23 – 24

Before you start reading these history chapters, it would be a good idea to read all of **Psalms 139** and get excited about God helping you search your heart.

God bless you as you get to know this part of his word better, and as you get to know his heart (as well as your heart) better.

John Sullivan
January 2021

NOTE: Your study will be even more practical and inspiring, if you spend some time looking in Bible study references like the ones listed on p. 26. Before you start this study, take a look at that list.

Conclusion

What's on God's Heart? What's In Your Heart?

I often say something like this at the conclusion of a Bible study series: "Thank you for taking the time to get to know the Bible better and to get to know God better." The reason I always think that (and sometimes write it) is because this is the only way I know to make this world a better place. The word of the Lord was rare in Samuel's youth, but he focused on changing that. It is rare today also, but we can also help change that. If you and I will put into practice even half of what we just read about God's heart, it will change the world. So, thank you for doing that!

I also pray that searching your heart, or letting God search your heart, has been a positive, life-changing experience for you. That may sound like a lofty statement, but I pray that it is true. Way too many people fear God. Not the awesome type of fear, but the threatening type of fear. That's because they do not know him. But you do know him. And you know that when he searches your heart, he helps you not only find the negative things that need to be eliminated, but he also helps you discover your true self – the one that is made in the image of God.

So, what's on God's heart and what's in your heart? Studying Saul, David, and Solomon has helped us look at six broad aspects of God's heart and how they impact our hearts.

- (1) He is the Rock. Our hearts get so much security from that.
- (2) He is more pleased with our heart than our sacrifice.
- (3) There is a peace about the fact that He is fighting our battles.
- (4) There is also a peace in our hearts that comes from owning our sin and believing that he is the God of grace.
- (5) There is a firm belief in the fact that, with God's help, we can face difficult situations in a faithful way.
- (6) There is a realization that God loves to view us as his temple.

You know God's heart, and it's all wonderful. God knows your heart, and it's . . . Well, it's not all bad! He loves to remind you of the good that is in your heart. Of course, it's not all good either. However, he is able and willing to help you remove any of the bad parts, not just criticize you for having them. He devises ways to help those who are banished to not remain estranged from him. That's who he is.

May God bless you as you continue to know his word and know his heart better!

John Sullivan

Week 6
Day 5

The Rise and Fall of a Great Kingdom

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Kings 10 – 11*.

1. When the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, what was her impression?
2. Later, Solomon would say that all of these accomplishments were meaningless (**Ecclesiastes 1:12-14**). What do you think he would say to you now about what is really important in your life and how you're doing with that?
4. What caused the fall of this great empire that Solomon built?
5. As a result of Solomon's sins, what did God say he would do to the kingdom?
6. If the book of *Ecclesiastes* represents what Solomon thought at the end of his life, there is reason to hope that he came back to his senses. How would you summarize his life?

Meditate and pray about what you have learned from Solomon's life.

Week 6
Days 6 & 7

Summary

Today's Date: _____

Knowing Your Bible/Knowing Your God

As you close this week's study, write a summary of what you know about this part of the Bible and what you know about God. How does he view temple?

Put it in your heart.

Quote the memory verse for the week and think about how it affects your life.

Share it.

Call or visit someone and share your thoughts from this week's studies.

Prepare for worship and fellowship.

This week you have been focusing on being God's temple. Before you meet with your brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship, pray about ways you can encourage them also in this area.

The United Kingdom

Week 1

Prophet Samuel:

God the Rock

1 Samuel 1 – 8

Memory Verse for the Week:

*There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.*

1 Samuel 2:2

Try to recall the memory verse two or three times every day this week and think about how it applies to your life at that moment.

Daily Worship

In your personal worship to God this week, focus on your desire to recognize God as the solid rock that you can always count on in these trying times. He has brought you this far, and he will take you the rest of the way.

Suggested Song: *O, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

Fellowship

Your brothers and sisters have the same Rock. Pray for them this week that all of us will clearly see his rock-solid strength and love.

Week 1
Day 1

No Rock Like God!

Read *1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:11*.

Today's Date: _____

1. Remember that this was during the challenging time of the Judges (about 1100 years or so before Christ) when faithfulness to God was not the common attribute. It is encouraging, though, to find faithful examples during that unfaithful period, such as Ruth, a few years earlier, and now Hannah.
How does Hannah's example of prayer help you in these trying times?
2. Hannah's praise in chapter 2 contains our memory verse for the week (2:2). As we will see when we get to the end of *1 & 2 Samuel* (which, by the way, was originally all one scroll) this theme of God as the Rock will be repeated by David. It's an important concept about God that served as a bookend for this history book. This valuable truth is also referred to over 40 times in many other parts of the Bible. It is true in every generation that people and circumstances will sometimes be unreliable, but God is always the *Rock*.
How does that truth help you in light of everything that is going on today?

Meditate and pray about the solid "Rock" that God is in your life today.

Week 1
Day 2

Well Done, Medium, or Rare?

Read *1 Samuel 2:12 – 3:21*.

Today's Date: _____

1. "In those days the word of the LORD was rare." (3:1)
That sad and dangerous statement says a lot about Samuel's time, and it says a lot about our time. Of course, God has the ultimate control over his word (see **Amos 8:11 – 12**, for instance), but let's consider what might be some human causes of this condition, along with its effects and possible cures.
 - **Cause.** From today's reading, what would you say were some causes of the scarcity of God's word at that time? How about our times?
 - **Effect.** How do you think the absence of God's word might have impacted their daily lives? How about the lives of people today?
2. Samuel, who is considered to be the last of the judges and the first of the prophets, focused on reversing that absence of God's word in his lifetime (3:19 – 4:1). We obviously don't want that absence to describe our lives or our times. Again, only God has the ultimate control over this, but what will you do to help change it in your life and in our world today?

What's in your heart? Meditate and pray about your commitment to make sure that God's word will not be rare in your life.

Week 6
Day 3

Building the Temple and the Palace

Read *1 Kings 5 – 7*.

Today's Date: _____

1. Building God's Temple
 - How big was it?
 - How long did it take to finish?
2. Building Solomon's Palace
 - How big was it?
 - How long did it take to finish?
3. Solomon spent a huge amount of time and effort, sparing absolutely no expense to make the temple a beautiful structure that would honor God. All Scripture testifies to the importance and long-lasting value of that venture. So, while we don't read too much into this, it's hard to ignore the fact that he spent much more time building a much bigger palace for himself.

As Christians, we are the temple of God. As human beings we also all want a house of some sort to live in, and there is certainly nothing wrong in making it as good as we possibly can. God blesses us with things like that to enjoy and use to bless others. The question we might want to consider occasionally is: *do you spend as much time making sure that your temple is pleasing to God as you do making sure your house is pleasing to you?*

Again, this is **not** to say that God doesn't want us to spend any effort on our own homes. Hopefully, the point is clear: do we spend more effort on our spiritual temple? As Jesus would imply, *where is your treasure?*

Read **Haggai 1**; then meditate and pray about your temple and your palace.

Week 6
Day 4

God Blesses the Temple and Solomon

Read *1 Kings 8 – 9*.

Today's Date: _____

1. What stands out to you about Solomon's prayer during the dedication ceremony of the temple?
2. What happened when the ark was brought into the temple?
How does that compare to what happened when the first tabernacle was dedicated some 500 years earlier in Moses' day (**Exodus 40:34-35**)?
Spend some time imagining what it was like to see God's glory that day!
3. What stands out to you about God's conversation with Solomon in chapter 9, which contains this week's memory verse?

Meditate and pray about the glory that he brings to your life as his temple.

Week 6
Day 1

David's Charge to Solomon

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Kings 1 – 2*.

1. David had promised that Solomon would be the king after him. But Adonijah, David's oldest living son, decided to take over as king instead. When he gathered his followers to announce himself as king, Adonijah did not invite Zadok the priest nor Nathan the prophet (1:26). Of course, we don't know for sure why he didn't invite them, but what do you think might be some of his reasons?
2. What eventually happened to Adonijah?
3. David gave his "*heart and soul*" charge to Solomon (2:2 – 4). You see two messages in that charge that are frequently shared in Scripture. Describe what you think is meant by each statement, how David might have felt about them, and how you can put your heart and soul into them:
 - *Walk in God's ways;*
 - *Keep his commandments.*

Meditate and pray about how these will be your "*heart and soul*" convictions and not just religious platitudes or clichés.

Week 6
Day 2

Solomon's Wisdom and Exceptions

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Kings 3 – 4*.

1. What would you do if God told you to ask him for anything you want?
What was Solomon's answer to that?
See **James 1:5**. Do you believe that God will give you the wisdom you need?
2. Describe Solomon's wisdom and knowledge in the areas of music, literature, and science (4:29 – 34).
3. What was the "*exception*" in Solomon's life (3:3)?
Do you have any exceptions in your life? "*I will obey God in everything, except _____.*" If so, what will you do about it?

What's in your heart? Pray about the wisdom you need from God and about eliminating any "*exception*" clauses from your covenant with him.

Week 1
Day 3

Raiders of the Lost Ark

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Samuel 4 – 5*.

1. The ark of the covenant
 - What did it represent to the Israelites?
 - What did the Philistines think about God and the ark? (Ironically, they seem to remember more about the exodus than the Israelites did.)
 - Why do you think God allowed them to conquer it?
 - What dramatic and sometimes humorous things happened when the ark was in Philistine territory?
2. The Israelites may have had more of a superstitious view of the ark than a truly spiritual one. The ark was holy, of course, but they seem to have thought that the mere presence of the ark meant that God was with them, overlooking the importance of what was in their heart. They also viewed the absence of the ark as meaning that God's glory had left them (4:21), overlooking the fact that they had left God long before that day. Losing the ark that day was sad, but losing their heart for God was much sadder.
One application of that for us today might be to make sure that we don't overlook the importance of having the right heart when we do outward activities like going to worship services, taking communion, reading our Bible, etc. The activity is important, but not more important than the heart.

Meditate and pray about having the right heart.

Week 1
Day 4

*When's the Last Time You Raised
Your Ebenezer?*

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Samuel 6 – 7*.

1. The Philistines realized that they would be much better off returning the ark. What was different about the Israelites at this time?
2. What did "*Ebenezer*" mean? (7:12)
Would this be a good time to raise your *Ebenezer*?
It's important and healthy to be honest with God about how difficult life is these days. But it's also important to meditate about God's deliverance. What are some of the ways the Rock has helped you up to this point?

Think about that the next time you sing the verse in the song that says: "*here I raise my Ebenezer.*"

Meditate about God's faithfulness, and pray about your "*Ebenezer*" statement.

Week 1
Day 5

Their Prayer for Reign

Read *1 Samuel 8*.

Today's Date: _____

1. What seems to be the reason, or reasons, that the Israelites wanted a king?
2. How did God feel about their desire to have a king (8:7)?
3. God always knew that his people would have human beings as leaders. Moses and Joshua, for instance, had as much authority as the kings. Read **Deuteronomy 17:14 – 20** to see what God said about kings centuries before Samuel's time. One key point, is that no matter who is in human authority, we recognize God as our true King and that his word is vitally important. (By the way, how many kings do you think did what God said through Moses in verse 18?)

This is possibly one of the most important discussions that we could have with ourselves. Are we praying for another king in our life, one that would make us fit in more with the rest of the world around us? Or, are we excited about having the LORD, the Rock, as our only King? Meditate and pray about what's in your heart about that.

Week 1
Days 6 & 7

Summary

Today's Date: _____

Knowing Your Bible/Knowing Your God

As you close this week's study, write a summary of what you know about this part of the Bible and what you know about God. How is God my Rock?

Put it in your heart.

Quote the memory verse for the week and think about how it affects your life.

Share it.

Call or visit someone and share your thoughts from this week's studies.

Prepare for worship and fellowship.

This week you have been worshipping God, the Rock, as your King. Before you meet with your brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship, pray for them and think about ways you can encourage them also in this area.

The United Kingdom

Week 6

King Solomon:
The God in Your Temple

1 Kings 1 – 11

Memory Verse for the Week:

The LORD said to him:

"I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there."

1 Kings 9:3

Try to recall the memory verse two or three times every day this week and think about how it applies to your life at that moment.

Daily Worship

In your personal worship to God this week, focus on your desire to spend your whole lifetime worshipping God as his spiritual temple.

Suggested Song: *Sanctuary*

Fellowship

Together with your brothers and sisters, you make up God's temple today. Spend time praying for them and thinking about ways to encourage them as the collective temple of God.

Week 5
Day 5

David's Final Words: God the Rock

Today's Date: _____

Read 2 Samuel 23 – 24.

1. David's last words refer to the topic mentioned in Hannah's prayer which started this section of Scripture: *God is our Rock* (23:3). This history book about God's people of that time period starts and ends with that constant. How does the reality of that statement help you in today's trying times?
2. David's mighty men and their exploits are described here (23:8 – 39). What stands out to you about them?
3. Chapter 24 does not clearly say what was so wrong with taking a census that God would have responded in this dramatic way. Joab's first reaction may be a hint: perhaps God did not want David to rely on numbers. Once again, though, we see David own up to his sin, rather than make excuses. What do you learn from all of this?

What's in your heart? Meditate on David's life and the lessons it teaches you.

Week 5
Days 6 & 7

Summary

Today's Date: _____

Knowing Your Bible/Knowing Your God

As you close this week's study, write a summary of what you know about this part of the Bible and what you know about God. How does he help in even the most difficult situations?

Put it in your heart.

Quote the memory verse for the week and think about how it affects your life.

Share it.

Call or visit someone and share your thoughts from this week's studies.

Prepare for worship and fellowship.

This week you have been praising God for the way he helps you in difficult situations. Before you meet with your brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship, pray for them and think about ways you can encourage them also.

The United Kingdom

Week 2

King Saul:
The God of Your Heart

1 Samuel 9 – 16

Memory Verse for the Week:

"The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7b

Try to recall the memory verse two or three times every day this week and think about how it applies to your life at that moment.

Daily Worship

In your personal worship to God this week, focus on how he looks at the heart, not the outward appearance.

Suggested Song: *Open the Eyes of My Heart*

Fellowship

Your brothers and sisters have that same awareness of God. Pray for ways to encourage them this week.

Week 2
Day 1

How Has the Spirit Changed You?

Today's Date: _____

Read 1 Samuel 9 – 10.

1. Saul was an impressive young man from a prominent family (9:1-2). What was his view of himself (9:21)?
2. Samuel told Saul that it was God who had anointed him as leader over his inheritance (10:1). What do you think is the significance of that statement?
3. A great principle is exemplified in **1 Samuel 10:6**.

*The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power,
and you will prophesy with them;
and you will be changed into a different person.*

What are some ways the Spirit of God has changed about you?

In spite of the changes in Saul, we still see him afraid, hiding among the baggage (10:22). Are we sometimes afraid, even though we have the Spirit? If so, why do you think that is?

Read also **2 Timothy 1:7**. Meditate and pray about how God's Spirit in you keeps you humble, yet confident.

Week 2
Day 2

Saul's Great Start: God's Spirit

Today's Date: _____

Read 1 Samuel 11 – 12.

1. The Spirit of God did come upon Saul (11:6). What changes do we see in him from the fearful man described in the previous chapter?
2. Samuel gave the Israelites a history lesson in chapter 12, along with a rebuke for rejecting God as their King. His rousing history lesson concluded with a thundering display of God's power. Recall how the people reacted to Samuel in chapter 8. How did they react this time?
3. In spite of the fact that the people had gone against the intended will of God, what was it that God wanted of them at this time (12:20)?

So, even when we go against God's will, and things end up different from his ideal plan for us, there is still an opportunity to serve God wholeheartedly.

4. What did Samuel say about praying for them (12:23)?

Meditate and pray about how you will apply the truths found in these verses.

Week 5
Day 3

The Dis-United Kingdom

Today's Date: _____

Read 2 Samuel 19 – 20.

1. What was Joab's advice to David (19:5 – 7)?
Do you think Joab was right?
2. These two chapters describe the turmoil and arguments going on as David returns to the throne. To say the least, the phrase "*United Kingdom*" does not really describe the hearts of the whole nation at that time. (Sounds a lot like our divided times, doesn't it?) Trouble was brewing between David's tribe, the men of Judah, and the rest of the men of Israel. That rivalry will eventually show up in a physical split in the kingdom, over 40 years later. You know how God feels about unity, so you can imagine how he was feeling at that time.

As challenging as it can sometimes be, we need to frequently pray with each other and talk with each other about what we can do to promote peace and unity in our world.

Try to spend some time today praying with someone else about unity.

Week 5
Day 4

Honoring an Ancient Pledge

Today's Date: _____

Read 2 Samuel 21 – 22.

1. You may recall the Gibeonites from **Joshua 9**, some 400 years before the time of David. Israel agreed at that time to let the Gibeonites live among them and to protect them. What had King Saul done to them (21:1)?

We don't actually have a record of Saul doing that, other than this brief reference, but we do see how David made restitution for what Saul did. What does that tell you about commitment to a promise?

2. What stands out to you about David's song of deliverance in chapter 22? (Compare with **Psalms 18**.) Note verse 30, which is our memory verse.

Some of the "*walls*" that David had to scale and some of the "*troops*" that he had to go against in this week's readings were the consequences of some of his own sins. (**NOTE:** "*advance against a troop*" could also be translated "*run through a barricade*.") What would you say are some of the keys about the way David handled those challenging times?

Meditate and pray about the way God helps you overcome difficult situations, even those times when we have to deal with the consequences of our own sin.

Week 5
Day 1

Absalom's Rebellion

Read 2 Samuel 15 – 16.

Today's Date: _____

1. You know that David knew that God would give him the victory in any battle. Why do you suppose David chose to run away from Absalom, rather than fight him?

Do you see how this is similar to the way he ran from Saul, even though he probably could have easily defeated him?

2. How did some people treat David as he left Jerusalem?

Can you imagine how that felt? Do some of David's psalms make more sense to you now? For instance, how do you think this experience relates to **Psalm 40:13 – 17**?

Do you also see that David is sticking to his conviction that God will fight this battle?

Meditate and pray about the way you will react when others close to you choose to do things that disappoint you or that you think disappoint God.

Week 5
Day 2

The End of the Rebellion

Read 2 Samuel 17 – 18.

Today's Date: _____

1. David is still in retreat, while his son is chasing him. How do you think that might have felt to David?

We asked that yesterday, but it may be important to make sure we get this. David was not a man who lived what we would call a charmed life. He suffered much from the hands of godless people, and he suffered a lot as a consequence of some of his own sins. Sometimes his actions cause us to question why he would be called *a man after God's own heart*. His psalms bear witness to two extremely important facts that might reveal why he was called that: (1) he cried out in deep distress to God about his pain, always being brutally honest with the God he felt so close to starting as a shepherd boy; and (2) he believed that his Shepherd would save him.

You read one psalm relating to those two facts yesterday. Today, read also **Psalm 86:14 – 17**. What stands out to you from that psalm?

2. How did Absalom die?

How did David react to the news of Absalom's death?

Meditate and pray about God's protecting love in your life during difficult times.

Week 2
Day 3

"I Saw; I Thought; I Felt."

Read 1 Samuel 13 – 14.

Today's Date: _____

1. "I saw . . . I thought . . . I felt." (13:11-13) But not "I prayed and sought godly advice." Saul allowed his panic as an excuse for offering a sacrifice that he was not supposed to offer. What do you see from his experience that is common to our sins today?
2. Note the importance of the phrase in verse 14 "*a man after his own heart*." That was going to be David. What did that imply about Saul?
3. Describe Jonathan's faith (14:6) and his armor-bearer's loyalty (14:7). (This is one place where we find the phrase that is used often today: "*heart and soul*.")
4. As often happened when individuals put their trust in God, God sent a great victory. "*It was a panic sent by God*." (verse 15) What do you learn from that?

Meditate and pray about how you want to be someone after God's heart.

Week 2
Day 4

What is Better than Sacrifice?

Read 1 Samuel 15.

Today's Date: _____

1. As a result of Saul's incomplete obedience, how did God feel (verse 11)?
2. What were Saul's excuses for his incomplete obedience?

How did he try to cover it up with sacrifices?
3. "*To obey is better than sacrifice*." (verse 22)
The way our modern religious world has interpreted the word "*obey*", it's hard to see much difference between *obey* and *sacrifice*. That mindset makes both seem like works. But obviously God saw a difference here. In Scriptures, *obey* is often connected with loving him and being whole-hearted, not as ways of trying to earn our salvation. See **John 14:15**, for instance. *Sacrifice*, as used here, seems to be referring to ways we try to please God with what we give up for him. Of course, sacrifice is important, but do you see how he wants your heart more than he wants your impressive sacrifices?

What's in your heart? Meditate and pray about how you want to give your heart to God without excuses, rather than impress him with your outward actions.

**Week 2
Day 5**

Entrance or Exit of the Spirit?

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Samuel 16*.

1. One of the most important things to remember about God is that he looks at the heart (16:7, our memory verse for this week). How does that make you feel?
2. The Spirit came upon David in power (16:13). How would the entrance of the Spirit have changed his life?
3. Meanwhile, the opposite happened to Saul. The Spirit departed from him (16:14). How would the exit of the Spirit have changed his life?
4. Saul brought David into his presence. David became one of Saul's armor-bearers and played his harp to give Saul some peace. What do you think Saul might have felt from David's music that gave him peace?

Continue to meditate and pray about what is in your heart.

**Week 2
Days 6 & 7**

Summary

Today's Date: _____

Knowing Your Bible/Knowing Your God

As you close this week's study, write a summary of what you know about this part of the Bible and what you know about God. How does he focus on heart?

Put it in your heart.

Quote the memory verse for the week and think about how it affects your life.

Share it.

Call or visit someone and share your thoughts from this week's studies.

Prepare for worship and fellowship.

You have been focusing on having a heart for God. Before you meet with your brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship, pray for them and think about ways you can encourage them also in that area.

The United Kingdom

Week 5

***King David: The God of
Your Tough Times***

2 Samuel 15 – 24

Memory Verse for the Week:

*With your help I can advance against a troop;
with my God I can scale a wall.*

2 Samuel 22:30

Try to recall the memory verse two or three times every day this week and think about how it applies to your life at that moment.

Daily Worship

In your personal worship to God this week, focus on how God is devoted to helping you with life's most difficult situations.

Suggested Song: *Waymaker*

Fellowship

Your brothers and sisters have to deal with difficult situations also. Pray for them that they will have a faithful attitude, centered on God's heart, even when life is difficult.

Week 4
Day 5

Amnon Had a Friend.

Today's Date: _____

Read *2 Samuel 13 – 14*.

1. The Bible says (13:3) that “*Amnon had a friend.*” Recall how David found strength in God from listening to his friend Jonathan. But what was the result of Amnon listening to his friend?

What convictions does that give you about the way you give advice to friends and how you listen to advice from friends?

2. What happened to Amnon and Absalom?
3. David eventually forgave Absalom. Meditate on our memory verse, the wise woman's insightful statement in 14:14, “. . . he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him.” That's a different view of God than the one that says that he is always trying to destroy us. I'm sure David saw how it had applied to him personally. Do you see how it applies to you?

What's in your heart? Meditate on and pray about how God has devised a way for us to come to him, in spite of the unthinkable things we may have done.

Week 4
Days 6 & 7

Summary

Today's Date: _____

Knowing Your Bible/Knowing Your God

As you close this week's study, write a summary of what you know about this part of the Bible and what you know about God. How is he the God of grace?

Put it in your heart.

Quote the memory verse for the week and think about how it affects your life.

Share it.

Call or visit someone and share your thoughts from this week's studies.

Prepare for worship and fellowship.

This week you have been focusing on having the twin attributes of (1) humbly owning your own sin as well as (2) believing that God is the God of grace. Before you meet with your brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship, pray for them and think about ways you can encourage them also in these two areas.

The United Kingdom

Week 3

King David:
The God of Your Battles

1 Samuel 17 – 31

Memory Verse for the Week:

*All those gathered here will know that it is not by
sword or spear that the LORD saves,
for the battle is the LORD's
and he will give all of you into our hands.*

1 Samuel 17:47

Try to recall the memory verse two or three times every day this week and think about how it applies to your life at that moment.

Daily Worship

In your personal worship to God this week, focus on your willingness to let him lead you in the battles that you have in your life.

Suggested Song: *I Hear God Singing to Me*

Fellowship

Your brothers and sisters have battles also. Pray about how you can encourage them to trust God to lead them in those battles.

Week 3
Day 1

David and Goliath

Read 1 Samuel 17 – 19.

Today's Date: _____

1. Why do you think there was such a contrast between the way Saul and the other Israelites reacted to Goliath's defiance and the way David did?
2. Even though David knew that the battle belonged to God (17:47, this week's memory verse), he was willing to do his part. What do you think happens if:
 - We fight our spiritual and emotional battles without God?
 - We leave everything to him and aren't willing to do our part?
3. Describe the relationship between Jonathan and David (18:1 – 4).
4. Why do you think Saul turned against David (18:6 – 9)?
5. David had great success in everything he did because the LORD was with him (18:14). Meanwhile, Saul was trying to kill him (chapter 19). Why do you think David ran from Saul, even though he was able to fight so valiantly against the Philistines?

Meditate on and pray about the faith you want to have in letting God lead your battles and the courage that you want to have to do your part.

Week 3
Day 2

Do You Attract the Three D's?

Read 1 Samuel 20 – 22.

Today's Date: _____

1. Jonathan protected David from Saul many times. What did Saul think about Jonathan's relationship with David (20:30)?
How would you think that felt to Jonathan?
2. David went to the priest Ahimelech and ate the consecrated bread (chapter 21), a story that Jesus referred to in **Matthew 12:3 – 4**. He then went to the foreign King Achish and pretended to be insane before him. He wrote **Psalms 34** at that time, which gives some great insight into both the faithfulness and the intense turmoil that David was going through then.
3. What three "D's" described many of David's followers (22:2)?
Would you have fit in with them?

Perhaps more importantly, do you think the gospel has a message for people who feel that way today, or should the church try to avoid those people all together? (See **Luke 4:18**, for instance.)

Meditate and pray about the way you can help discouraged people.

Week 4
Day 3

David's Desire to Build a Temple

Read 2 Samuel 7 – 9.

Today's Date: _____

1. Sometimes God says "no" or "wait."
 - What seems to be David's motivation for wanting to build a temple?
 - What reasons did God give for delaying that request?
 - How did David react? How do you react when God says "no" or "wait"?
2. Twice in chapter 8, the Bible says that "*The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.*" What do you think is the importance of that statement in David's life? What about your life?
3. Recall the promise David made to Saul in **1 Samuel 24:21-22**. How did David live up to that in the case of Mephibosheth? What do you think the typical military advisor of that day would have said about that?

Meditate and pray about how you will react when God says "no" or "wait."

Week 4
Day 4

You're the Man!

Read 2 Samuel 10 – 12.

Today's Date: _____

1. Describe Joab's faith and courage at this time (10:12).
2. How do you think a man as faithful as David could commit adultery with a woman and have her husband murdered?

What does that tell you about our need to be vigilant in our battle against sin?
3. Uriah, her husband, is listed later as one of David's mighty men (23:39). Joab was the one that had to carry out those orders. Can you imagine what that might have done to his respect for David?
4. If you were the judge (which, of course, you are not), how would you compare the sins of David with the sins of Saul?
5. "*You are the man!*" (12:7) That phrase that might sound good in some contexts. But not here. How much courage do you think it took for Nathan to say that?
 - How did David react when he was confronted about his sin?
 - Recall: how did Saul react when he was confronted about his sin?

While we may think that the sins of David are worse than the sins of Saul, this reaction could be one difference that God saw in their hearts.

One of the greatest displays of God's amazing grace is his forgiveness of David (20:13). Read **Psalms 51**, and pray about your reaction to the awareness of sins in your life and your acceptance of the grace of God forgiving you of those sins.

Week 4
Day 1

Don't Kill the Messenger.

Today's Date: _____

Read 2 Samuel 1 – 3.

1. How did David respond when he heard that Saul and Jonathan had died?
How does the phrase “Don't kill the messenger” apply to this story? (Unfortunately, as you will see in later readings, David was known for this.)
2. What stands out to you about David's lament for them (1:19 – 27)? (Note, by the way, that his genuine lament was for both of them.)
3. David was recognized by God as the new king. So why was there a civil war in Israel at that time?

Why do things not always go smoothly, even when we are trying to follow God's will?

Meditate and pray about trusting God, even when things don't go smoothly.

Week 4
Day 2

David Crowned as King

Today's Date: _____

Read 2 Samuel 4 – 6.

1. How old was David when he was finally crowned king (5:4 – 5)?
We don't know for sure how old he was when Samuel anointed him as king (**1 Samuel 16**). But it could have easily been 15 years between the anointing and the coronation. Think about what those years were like!
What do you think those years of testing may have done to toughen David up and prepare him to be king?
Do you see how God sometimes uses that type of preparation to help us do a better job at what he has anointed us to do?
2. How did Jerusalem finally become the capital? Look at **Joshua 15:63** to see the background to that story, some 400 years earlier.
3. Chapter 5 says twice that “David inquired of the LORD.” What do you think is the importance of that fact in David's life? What about your life?
4. The Bible mentions David's wives (5:13 – 14). Polygamy is a hard topic for us to understand. It was a common practice in the Old Testament, but you rarely, if ever, read about it with a positive result, and the New Testament definitely gives a negative view of the practice.
5. What sobering lesson did David learn about moving the ark (chapter 6)?

Meditate and pray about your desire to do God's will and wait for his timing.

Week 3
Day 3

What is the Goal of Your Relationships?

Today's Date: _____

Read 1 Samuel 23 – 25.

1. When David needed it the most (23:16), Jonathan:
“helped him find strength in God.”
It's possible that this powerful statement gives us some insight into the purpose of godly relationships. Put some details into those words. What do you think Jonathan might have done to help David find strength in God?
More to the point today, how can you do that for others?
2. What do you think about the way David showed mercy to Saul? Is that the kind of strength in God that most people would have expected David to have? After all, this is the same one who cut off Goliath's head. How does David's mercy for Saul display the strength that we can only find in God?
3. Sometimes helpful advice comes from unexpected places. How did Abigail keep David from making a big mistake? (Notice, by the way, how David almost forgot that the battle is the LORD's.)

Meditate and pray about how you can help others find strength in God.

Week 3
Day 4

Which Witch?

Today's Date: _____

Read 1 Samuel 26 – 28.

1. What seems to be Saul's number one obsession at this time?
2. At the same time, David keeps referring to Saul as “the LORD's anointed.” He was more focused on God than on the person. You can see how that fit in with his conviction that the battle is the LORD's. In other words, David understood that God put Saul in, and God can take him out.
David wrote **Psalms 54** at that time. What insights to you get from that psalm about both the faithfulness and the turmoil that David experienced then?
3. Meanwhile, Saul resorts to witchcraft in one of the most unusual stories found in the Bible (28:7 – 25). Saul does something he probably never thought he would ever do. He, himself, had earlier banned the mediums from Israel (28:3), but now he resorts to seeking one out. Do you think unresolved sin can bring us down so low that we also might do things we wouldn't imagine we would do?

What's in your heart? Meditate and pray about your on-going commitment to having a whole-hearted devotion to the true King.

Week 3
Day 5

Saul and Jonathan's Last Days

Today's Date: _____

Read *1 Samuel 29 – 31*.

1. How was David kept from fighting in the battle that ultimately killed Saul and Jonathan (chapter 29)?
2. When things looked horrible for David, he found strength in God (30:6). His friend Jonathan wasn't around at that time to encourage him to do that, but Jonathan's help earlier may have had this positive lingering effect on him. David was then able to encourage his men to fight bravely. What you receive from some, you can pass on to others.
3. Saul and Jonathan died in the battle with the Philistines. How would you summarize their lives? (See **I Chronicles 10:13 – 14** about Saul.)

Meditate and pray about what you have learned from Saul and Jonathan's life that you want to apply (or in Saul's case, avoid) in your own life.

Week 3
Days 6 & 7

Summary

Today's Date: _____

Knowing Your Bible/Knowing Your God

As you close this week's study, write a summary of what you know about this part of the Bible and what you know about God. Who's battle is it?

Put it in your heart.

Quote the memory verse for the week and think about how it affects your life.

Share it.

Call or visit someone and share your thoughts from this week's studies.

Prepare for worship and fellowship.

This week you have been focusing on allowing God to lead you in life's battles. As David could tell us, it's hard to be consistent with that conviction. Before you meet with your brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship, pray for them and think about ways you can encourage them in that area.

The United Kingdom

Week 4

King David:
The God of Grace

2 Samuel 1 – 14

Memory Verse for the Week:

*Like water spilled on the ground,
which cannot be recovered, so we must die.
But God does not take away life;
instead, he devises ways so that a banished person
may not remain estranged from him.*

2 Samuel 14:14

Try to recall the memory verse two or three times every day this week and think about how it applies to your life at that moment.

Daily Worship

In your personal worship to God this week, focus on how you want to practice the twin attributes: (1) owning your sins and (2) believing totally in the amazing grace of God to forgive you.

Suggested Song: *Amazing Grace, the Chains are Gone*

Fellowship

Pray for your brothers and sisters as well and think of ways to encourage them in these two attributes.