DISCIPLESHIP WITH DAVID

A 10-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DUSTIN CROWE

Discipleship with David:

A 10-Week Bible Study

Dustin Crowe

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OVERVIEW OF THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is meant to be used alongside *Strength for the Weak: Finding Hope in David's Failures and Christ's Faithfulness*. While the content in each is unique, the 10 weeks of material in this study parallel the 10 chapters of *Strength for the Weak*. This guide can be used for individuals but is designed to move from personal study to group discussion.

Each week's study includes three daily studies, a lesson summary, and a set of discussion questions. The daily studies help you get into God's Word to notice key truths and themes, but also to reflect on how to respond to God in your life. The daily studies focus on David's narrative, his words in the psalms, and a wider study of the theme across Scripture, including in the person and work of Christ. The weekly discussion questions are meant to be used when participants gather to discuss and apply what was learned from the week's study.

David's story models (positively and negatively) what it means to be a disciple who knows, walks with, and reflects God. We learn from him how to be men with a heart after God. But the story of David is really the story of the God who reveals Himself and proves His power and faithfulness through David's story. Because David lived the normal ups-and-downs of life, and because his psalms express the same range of emotions and experiences we go through, we can see ourselves in David's story. We can not only learn about discipleship from David and learn about God through David's story, but we can see how God might is just as present and at work with similar power in our stories.

You can find additional materials on David's story and words at www.indycrowe.com.

WEEK 1: EMBRACE DEPENDENCE

David models how to experience God's strength by embracing dependence on God.

"The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people." (1 Samuel 13:14)

"But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. **17** O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love." (David in Psalm 59:16-17)

- Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 13-16
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Embracing Dependence in Scripture
- Week 1 Discussion Questions

WEEK 1: EMBRACE DEPENDENCE

Day 1: David's Story (1 Samuel 13-16)

While 1 Samuel 8-15 focuses on King Saul, there are key verses that set up David's story that begins in 1 Samuel 16. We can't grasp what it means that David was a man after God's own heart unless we realize how that phrase contrasts David to King Saul.[1]

The Backdrop of a King after the People's Hearts (Saul)

1. Why did Israel desire an earthly king in 1 Samuel 8:4-9, 19-22?

2. What characteristics of Saul made him the kind of king Israel wanted (see 1 Samuel 9:2; 10:23-24)?

3. King Saul failed to trust God and sinned by living in fear, disobeying God's commands, and setting up a monument to himself (1 Samuel 13:8-14; 15:1-27). As God communicated His rejection of Saul as king, how was the future king described in 1 Samuel 13:14; 15:28 (see also Acts 13:22)?

4. What are ways you might be tempted to focus on developing external characteristics alone (appearance, skills, personality, resume, etc.) rather than focusing on developing the heart?

The Rise of a King after God's Heart (David)

Read 1 Samuel 13-16

1. What impressed Samuel about Eliab (1 Samuel 16:7)? How does God's response in 1 Samuel 16:7 make clear what God prioritizes in His servants and leaders?

2. What are details in the story of 1 Samuel 16:1-12 that highlight David as the unlikely candidate—from a human perspective—to be chosen as king?

3. In 1 Samuel 16:13, 18, how was David equipped for the plans God had in store for him?

4. What are some things we learn about David from 1 Samuel 16:11-12, 18-23?

5. How do the stories about King Saul and young David remind you not to trust in yourself or to worry about your weaknesses but to put your trust in God alone?

[1] See "10 Contrasts Between Saul and David," Dustin Crowe at indycrowe.com.

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

God rejected King Saul because of his pride and sin, and God chose David as the future king because he trusted in God alone. His heart was humble, but it was aflame with faith in God and love for God. David pursued God, put his faith in God, and rested in the power of God. In all these things, he teaches us how to trust in God for all that we need and desire. David's words penned in the psalms reveal his heart for God. As we consider those words, they can shape and strengthen our hearts as well.

1. What do you notice about David's understanding of the value of humility, dependence, and weakness from Psalm 25:9; 34:18; 40:17; 138:6?

2. Read Psalm 18:32, 39; 22:19; 28:7-8; 59:9, 16-17. How did David experience God's power and strength in his weakness and need?

3. What are practical things you can do to cultivate humility before God and dependence on God? How can you allow weakness, lack, or insufficiency to cause you to trust in God?

4. Read Psalm 20. What are words or phrases expressing David's reliance on and trust in God?

5. David stated that he put his trust in God alone rather than in himself, others, or human resources (Psalm 20:7). What are things you're tempted to trust in when you feel weak, fearful, or have needs?

6. David tried to walk in God's ways with a pure heart (though he didn't do so perfectly). Read Psalm 7:8-10; 19:14; 26:1-3; 51:10; 139:23-24. How do these verses express David's prioritization of his character and heart? How might this instruct us?

7. Read Psalm 16:11; 21:6; 27:4; 63:1-3. What was the passion and delight of David's heart?

8. From both David's story and words read so far, how are you encouraged or challenged to walk with God and seek after God in new or deeper ways?

Day 3: Embracing Dependence in Scripture

The Bible offers us story after story of God showing up in the brokenness, emptiness, and weakness of people to pour out His goodness, grace, and glory. These stories remind us to put our confidence is in God alone. His power is given to us and displayed through us, not by removing our weakness, but in working through it.

The humility of David was far exceeded by the humility of the Son of God who took on flesh, was born in a manger, washed the feet of his disciples, and laid down his life for sinners. While David teaches how to be a disciple, we ultimately follow the Son of David, Jesus Christ. And following Jesus leads us down a path that embraces humility, weakness, and the cross so we can experience Christ's strength and victory. In Christ, there is more than enough strength for the weak.

1. While pride, self-reliance, and self-confidence are the ways of the world, embracing humility and dependence is the way of discipleship. What are some reasons it's challenging to see the benefits of humility, meekness, dependence, and even our own weakness?

2. Read Exodus 14:13–14; 2 Chronicles 20:13–23; Proverbs 21:31; Jeremiah 9:23–24. How are strength and victory in God's hands?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-30; 2 Corinthians 4:7-11; 12:8-10. How was Paul's view of weakness different from the way we think about it today?

4. Read Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; 29:23; Matthew 23:12; James 4:6-10. Why should we take seriously the Bible's warnings against pride and encouragements toward humility? Is there any specific way you need to respond to these warnings and admonitions?

5. What are some ways Jesus demonstrated humility in his incarnation, birth, life, and death?

6. Read the beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12. What surprises you about Jesus' description of His kingdom-citizens? How does this counter what we typically imagine in a "great leader"?

7. Read Philippians 2:3-8. As a follower of Jesus, called to imitate and image Him, how do we walk in Jesus's footsteps by going low, setting aside our rights and desires, and serving others? What are a couple of intentional ways you can humbly serve others this week?

8. The sinless Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses because he lived a fully human life (Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:2). How does that encourage you in weaknesses and suffering?

WEEK 1: EMBRACE DEPENDENCE

The book of 1 Samuel opens with a barren woman named Hannah. She humbly turned to God in her dependence and need, and God miraculously provided her with a son, Samuel. She responded by offering a wonderful prayer that acts as a lens to read 1 Samuel (including David's story). Hannah praised the God who casts down the prideful and self-reliant but raises up the humble who put their hope in God. "The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength" (1 Samuel 2:4). She recognized that "not by might shall a man prevail" but God "will give strength to his king" (1 Samuel 2:9, 10).

We notice right away the theme in 1 Samuel: *God's power being displayed in human weakness*. This theme is communicated early, not only so we read the contrasting stories of men like Saul and David with it in view, but also so we live with this reality fixed in our minds. God's power is displayed to and through the weak. His mercy and might are experienced and exalted, not in the strong and self-sufficient, but in those who embrace humility and dependence. This is how God worked in Scripture, and it's how God works today.

God didn't choose young David as Israel's future king because he was the tallest, strongest, best looking, wealthiest, or the most gifted. God prioritized David's character and faith. David wasn't defined by his external stature but his internal character; not his height but his heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

The early chapters of David's narrative make clear that David was inexperienced and overlooked. It was in fact David's humility, even his weakness, that made him a fit vessel to be used by God to display the glory of God. David trusted God instead of trusting in himself. His understanding of his limits and dependence, combined with his knowledge of God's power and faithfulness, caused him to put his faith fully in God and rest in God. God described him a man after His own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).

David models for us how disciples experience God's strength by embracing their dependence and cultivating humility before God, trust in God, and a heart for God.

We might think our flaws and frailty disqualify us from being used for God's glory, but these are the raw materials He works with to display His glory. If we trust in our own strength, then we don't need to trust in God. If our abilities and experiences are showcased, then God's glory and grace won't get magnified. As we surrender ourselves fully to God, He works through our limits to display His infinite power, unmatched wisdom, and steadfast love.

God isn't focused on the externals. He's not looking for those who are influencers, have the biggest bank account, the most impressive resume, or those who can woo and wow everyone around them. God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). He values what is undervalued. He wants you to be a person of virtue and faith, with humility before God, trust in God, obedience to God, and a heart for God. God works through those whose trust isn't in what they can do but in what God can do through them.

The way to experience God's power and presence is to embrace your dependence and lean into God's grace. Dependence is the way of discipleship.

Are you faithful? Are you humble and teachable? Do you let weakness push you to trust in God? Can you go low to serve others? Are you pursuing holiness in Christ and abiding with Christ? These are the things that matter to God. If we want to be a man of God, the place we must start is our dependence on God and trust in God. Embrace your weakness so you can embrace a life of faith in God alone.

WEEK 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. Based upon the context of 1 Samuel 13-16, what do you think it means that David was a man after God's heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22)?

2. God said to Samuel that Man looks at outward appearance, but God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). How are God's values and priorities somewhat different from our values and priorities?

3. Why do you think Paul could say things like, "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses" (2 Cor. 12:9) or "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10)? How do you need to believe and apply this in your own life?

4. What is one weakness, a limit, a need, or situation where you really feel your dependence on God?

5. If we embrace weakness to cultivate humility toward self and trust in God, what are a couple practical things you can do to allow weakness to push you to God?

6. How might you need to think or act different to grow in faith through your weakness or to experience the presence and power of God in your weakness?

7. What role might prayer play in helping us cultivate humility and dependence on God?

8. Read Genesis 39:2-3; Joshua 6:27; 1 Samuel 3:19; 16:18; 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Samuel 5:10. What are some things involved in God being "with" these people? In what ways is God "with us" today? Why is this significant for us?

9. What is one encouragement, personal challenge, truth or verse to remember, or a way you need to respond that you are taking away from this week on embracing weakness by faith?

WEEK 2: FIGHT BATTLES IN GOD'S STRENGTH

David could face his fear because his courage came from God and confidence was in God.

"For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand." (1 Samuel 17:47)

"I love you, O LORD, my strength. **2** The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. **3** I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies." (David in Psalm 18:1-3)

- Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 17
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: God-Centered Courage and Confidence in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 17

It was David's passion for God and trust in God that led him to fight the formidable giant, Goliath. David had experienced God's help in the past and he believed God would be faithful again. Because he firmly believed his battles belonged to the Lord, he lived by faith rather than fear. His courage was rooted in his God-centered confidence. David fought for God's glory in God's name with God's weapons by trusting in God's power. The more we know and worship God, the more we'll trust Him. We might still feel worried, afraid, or anxious, but we'll believe God is bigger than what we face and every battle belongs to Him.

Read 1 Samuel 17

1. How does 1 Samuel 17 provide an example of last week's theme that God's power and glory are displayed through those who are dependent on God and put their trust in God?

2. What are differences in the responses of the soldiers (1 Samuel 17:11, 24-25) versus David (1 Samuel 17:26, 32)? What is David's concern or passion behind his response?

3. Read 1 Samuel 17:33, 38. What are a couple things Saul put his confidence in? Now read 1 Samuel 17:32, 34-37. What was the source of David's courage and confidence?

4. What do you think David meant when he said the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47)?

5. What did David want to see happen because of his victory over Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17:46-47)? How is that the same passion that led David into the fight against Goliath (1 Samuel 17:26)?

6. Read the lengthy description of Goliath's armor and weapons in 1 Samuel 17:4 and then the brief description of David's weapon in 1 Samuel 17:40, 50. Why do you think the narrator details Goliath's armor and weapons? What do you think is emphasized by the fact that God worked through David having only a shepherd's sling and stone?

7. How does this story reveal David's (1) trust in God, (2) passion for God, and (3) walk with God?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

Many of David's psalms convey the range of emotions he felt, including stress, fear, discouragement, anxiety, and despair. But instead of being ruled by his thoughts and emotions, David fought to remember who God was, His faithfulness in the past, and His trustworthy promises. The more David set his mind and heart on God, the more strength, courage, and hope he found. David models for us how to renew our thoughts by reflecting on the God who empowers us, strengthens us, and fights for us. As we reflect on God's trustworthiness, it reminds us of all the reasons we can trust Him. Our confidence and hope aren't in anything found in us or around us; it's in the God who is faithful to us and fighting for us.

1. How are the words David used to describe and praise God in Psalm 18:1-3 rooted in David's experience of battles (and God's help)?

2. While not related to his fight against Goliath, David wrote Psalm 18 about God's deliverance of him in other battles. Read Psalm 18:17-19. How does David credit God for his defense and victory?

3. Read Psalm 18:31-39. David believed God's defense and victory took place through the actions of David as he was equipped and strengthened by God. How does David's trust in God lead to faith in action rather than passivity? Why should trust in God lead us to faith in action?

4. David connected his experience of God fighting for him and strengthening him in Psalm 18 to his prayers for God's help in Psalm 18:6 (see also Psalm 28:1-2; 38:22; 86:16; 143:9). How can you ask God for His power, strength, grace, and help in the battles you're facing?

5. How do David's words in the psalms reflect his honesty about some of the things he felt and feared, and yet his fight of faith to put his trust in God (not what he felt or faced)? How can you be honest about what you're feeling or fearing while also fighting to remember who God is and find your confidence in Him and His promises?

Day 3: God-Centered Courage and Confidence in Scripture

Throughout Scripture, God's people endured fear, worry, discouragement, stress, and anxiety. While those trials tempted God's people to turn toward idols, it also gave them an opportunity to trust in God. Only the almighty, sovereign, faithful, fully wise God is to be trusted. Not only is He all-powerful, but His promises assure us that He fights on our behalf and empowers us with His strength. As God works in our weakness and need, His faithfulness is proven to us and His glory is made known through us.

While there is much to learn about trusting God from David, this story also points us to our true champion and defender, Jesus Christ. We need someone to take our place, fight our enemies, and win victory and freedom for us. Jesus is the savior who did all these things for us in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. We must see how the story of David vs Goliath points out our need for Jesus and reveals the faithfulness of Jesus, our true warrior and savior.

1. Read 2 Chronicles 14:11; 20:15; Hosea 1:7; 2 Corinthians 10:4. Why do we need to remind ourselves that strength, victory, and our battles are in God's hands?

2. Read Psalm 118:8-9; Proverbs 11:28; Isaiah 31:1; Jeremiah 17:5. What is one trial, trouble, or temptation in your life today? What are things (other than God) you're tempted to look to or trust in?

3. In 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Paul tells us God often uses weakness and dependence to glorify God. How might God working in your situation or in your weakness reveal His faithfulness, power, or wisdom?

4. How does our sin make us like Israel in 1 Samuel 17: in need of someone to take our place, rescue us, and bring victory to us? How is what Jesus did for us both similar to and different from what David did for Israel?

5. Read Colossians 2:8-15. As you resist temptation, fight sin, and pursue Christ, why do you need to remember that in Christ you're free from sin and your enemies are defanged and defeated?

6. How does remembering Christ's work on your behalf both give you power against sin and help you rest in Christ's grace?

WEEK 2 SUMMARY

Many people are familiar with the general storyline of David versus Goliath, but do we recognize the significance of the story? Do we see the power and glory of God on display when the young shepherd defeated a giant soldier? Do we notice the faithfulness of God in defending His people? Do we see our own need for a champion who can protect and rescue us?

The story of David versus Goliath assures us that our battles belong to the Lord. And since our life and circumstances are in God's hands, we can rest in Him while also finding the strength to live intentionally and courageously for His glory.

David's improbable victory illustrates the truth from last week that God's power is made clear through human weakness and dependence. If Saul, Israel's tallest man and the king, killed Goliath, we might have believed it was Saul's stature, well-crafted weapons, or experience in battle that gave him the upper hand. But when scrawny David showed up, and this undersized, inexperienced boy without armor or sword took down the mighty Goliath, everyone watching knew that God won the battle. God didn't use David despite these things; God used David because of these things. God made it clear that it was His might, not David's, that won the victory. God worked through human weakness.

Young David didn't step into the ring to fight Goliath because he trusted in himself or had an abundance of self-confidence. He didn't trust in weapons, armor, or any earthly resource. He put his trust in God alone. He lived by faith when others hid in fear. And he did it for God's glory, not his own gain.

It was because David knew God, trusted in God, and lived for God's glory above all things that he could live by faith when others shrunk in fear. He was a man who walked with God and worshipped God in everything, and it was this ongoing worship that animated his faith and trust in God.

The shepherd David believed God was more powerful than any army, soldier, or giant. He knew God had delivered him in the past and that God could deliver him again. He believed God was present and active in his life. It was his theology of God that led to his practical trust in God. His courage found its source in his knowledge of God and confidence in God.

When it comes to being a disciple, we can learn a lot from David. He reminds us that the battles in our own life are not on our shoulders or in our hands. They belong to God. David shows us what it looks like to be governed by faith in God rather than fear of circumstances. He shows us how to live a life centered around God's glory and praise rather than living for our own praise. And ultimately, David points us to Jesus, the champion who stepped down onto Earth, took our place on the cross, defeated the enemies of sin, Satan, and death, and brought us victory and freedom.

How do you deal with the instability, insecurity, and stresses in your life? How do you move forward in the face of fears, worries, and anxieties? How do you step into the valley despite feeling overwhelmed, weak, and ill-equipped for the tasks ahead? You do it by trusting in God's name, fighting in God's power, and resting in God's sovereignty over your situation. He is with you. He is fighting for you. He is working through you. And your deliverance, strength, and help all come from Him.

Walk by faith even when it's scary. Trust in God even when you can't yet see how He will help or deliver you. Fight knowing your battles belong to Him.

WEEK 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. What are some things that stand out to you about David's confidence in God from his words in 1 Samuel 17:26, 32-37, and 45-47?

2. How did David's trust in God propel his actions throughout 1 Samuel 17?

3. How do you root yourself in a God-centered confidence when you feel anxious, stressed, or discouraged?

4. In Psalm 28, what are ways David looked to God for his strength and help? How might you apply this in your own life so that you trust in God for the strength, grace, and help you need?

5. How does the story of David and Goliath point us to Jesus as our champion? How do you fight sin and pursue maturity in Christ in light of what Jesus has already accomplished for you?

6. Does this story mean that we are guaranteed immediate victory over any obstacle or "giant" in this life? Why or why not?

7. David stepped onto the battlefield and fought Goliath, but he also said God fought his battles for him. What might it look like to be faithful in the fight while still trusting God to fight for and through you?

8. What is one attribute of God, promise of God, or example of God's faithfulness in the past that you want to set your mind on this week? How can that truth strengthen and encourage you?

9. What can you apply from David's words, actions, or faith in 1 Samuel 17 to your own life?

WEEK 3: WATCH GOD WORK

David lived with eyes open to God's blessing, provision, and work in his needs and trials.

"And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him."
(1 Samuel 18:14)

"When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. **18** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. **19** Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all." (David in Psalm 34:17-19)

- Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 18-22
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: God's Provision and Presence in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 18-22

After the mountaintop moment of slaying Goliath, David experienced God's work on his behalf in the midst of stress and turmoil as Saul's anger increased. The king attempted to kill David, even while Saul's daughter married David and Saul's son became David's closest friend. David had to walk through painful and pressure-filled circumstances as he fled into the wilderness, desperate to stay alive. But God sustained him through resources, people, and encouragement along his journey. David's favor and success came from the Lord who was "with him." David knew this. He filled his psalms with praise and thanksgiving to the God who delivered, strengthened, and blessed him in countless ways.

Read 1 Samuel 18-22

1. What are some of the trials, troubles, and temptations that David faced in 1 Samuel 18-22? What would have made trusting God, waiting on God, or obedience to God difficult in these situations?

2. What was the defining factor underneath David's success and favor (1 Samuel 18:12, 14, 28)?

3. What are examples of God's provision, protection, and providential working for David in 1 Samuel 18-22?

4. What are ways that Jonathan was a good and godly friend for David in these chapters?

5. Why is cultivating significant friendships challenging in our day? What is one thing you can do this week to be a godly friend or to invest in a spiritual friendship?

6. How do the stories in 1 Samuel 18-22 convey that God is faithful and committed to our good even when life feels like it's falling apart (from our vantage) or even when God might feel distant?

7. Just as God used people as a means of provision and encouragement in David's life, God might do the same for you today. Who are people God has put in your life as a blessing and encouragement to you? God also wants to use you as a means of provision and support for others. What are specific ways you can be a source of blessing and encouragement to others this week?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

There are several Psalms written during this time in David's life where he hid from Saul in the wilderness (Psalm 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, and possibly 63 and 142). While it was a difficult season, full of trials, troubles, and temptations, David frequently turned to God in dependence and need. These discouraging days taught him to seek and delight in God. Trials have a way of reminding us of our great need for God and nudging us to trust in God. We take refuge in Him by drawing near to Him, finding security and rest in Him, and looking to Him for whatever it is we need.

1. How does David describe the way he turned to God in his dependence and need in Psalm 34:1-7?

2. Read Psalm 34:8-22. What are some things that David learned or declared about God after going through this trial?

3. How did David respond when he felt anxious or afraid in Psalm 56:3-4, 10-11? What would it look like for you to put your trust in God today when you feel stressed, worried, or afraid?

4. Read Psalm 5:3; 25:15; 34:5; 141:8; 145:15. What do you think it meant for David to look to God or set his eyes on God? How can you do this in your own life?

5. In Psalm 59:9-10, 16-17, David described God as his refuge. Have you ever experienced God as your refuge? What are things we can do to experience God as refuge?

6. Even though David was in great danger in this season of his life, several of his wilderness psalms include thanksgiving and praise (Psalm 34:1-2; 52:9; 56:12; 57:9; 59:16-17; 142:7). How can you cultivate praise and thanksgiving in unwanted or difficult situations?

7. What are three things you can thank God for today?

Day 3: God's Provision and Presence in Scripture

As David waited on God and endured difficult circumstances, the faithfulness, nearness, and power of God at work for His people was revealed. As we wait, we wait on God and watch for God in faith, believing He will keep all His promises, He will draw near with His presence, and He will protect us and provide for us according to His wisdom, power, and grace. But in the wilderness and in the waiting, we must cultivate trust. We must rest in God. We must remember His Word and how He has been faithful in our past. We must look to Jesus, the one who walked in our shoes in His own desert days but never sinned. He is our sympathetic High Priest. And He is God's greatest gift and provision no matter what situation we find ourselves in. Christ is the blessing. He alone can sustain, strengthen, and satisfy us.

1. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What are reasons Jesus gave for why we don't need to be anxious or afraid? How does knowing God help us find peace in the face of fear and worry?

2. Read Psalm 23:1-3; 34:9-10; Jeremiah 17:7-8; Matthew 7:11; Philippians 4:13, 19. Why can you rest in God's promise to provide what you need—according to His timing and plan?

3. Why is it so helpful to come back to God's promise to work all things together for our good in Christ (Romans 8:28-29) in sorrows or struggles? What other promises do you find hope and comfort in?

4. Jesus described himself as God's provision to His people, including as the bread of life (John 6:35) and life-giving water (John 7:37-38). What are some of the blessings and provision we have in Christ?

5. What are ways that Jesus is God's ultimate gift and provision to us in suffering, loss, or any wilderness situation?

WEEK 3 SUMMARY

David's life in this season was a mixture of blessing and hardship. God was with David and showed him favor, gave him victories, and blessed him in many ways. But he also faced a number of significant trials. The shadows of fear and discouragement hung over his life. Even though David lived on the edge of danger and death, he had everything he needed because God watched over him. God gave David the refreshment needed for his journey.

But what defined David's life in the wilderness weren't the trials endured. It was what God taught him and how his faith grew through it. We might not know exactly why we're in the wilderness, or how long we'll be there, but we can maximize our time and be changed by it. That happens by leaning into God. Live on the lookout for Him in His Word and how He's at work around you. Even in our trials and temptations, God is present with us and at work for us. We can know Him, respond to Him, trust in Him, worship Him, and walk with Him in *all* of life.

We follow in David's footsteps by looking around for how God cares for us, ways He's strengthening or encouraging us, and the small but significant ways God proves His commitment to us. Receive these gifts in gratitude. We don't see them as chance but as God's steadfast love poured out on us. We receive them from God's hands and let them lead to thankfulness, praise, and trust in God.

We should expect adversity, hardship, and sorrows. Jesus told us that in this world we will have troubles (John 16:33). But he also told us to take heart because He has overcome the world. We should take heart in knowing that our trials do not mean God is distant, absent, unhelpful, or failing us. Instead, we should pray for and look for all the ways God takes care of us, provides for and protects us, teaches and shapes us, offers encouragement, places people in our life to bless us, and drops small gifts into our life. That includes the gift of Jesus and every spiritual blessing that we have in him (Ephesians 1:3).

The empty wilderness or dry desert we might be in isn't beyond God's power to sprinkle in just what we need to keep going. There might be days where we have nothing left, but one thing we can pray for is a little encouragement, some provision for today, or enough refreshment to keep us going. God sustains and strengthen His people through one conversation, one person, one life-giving truth from the Word, one material provision, one encouragement, or one answer to prayer at a time.

God is at work in ordinary days and difficult situations. We often think we must wait until life slows down, finances aren't so tight, fewer difficult people surround us, or the worries and fears are less dominating, and then God will step into the picture to do something significant. We assume our mess or stress in life isn't the right environment to experience God. But God assures us that He shows up in our wilderness seasons and messy situations. He draws close to the brokenhearted and those overwhelmed by worries and weakness. He offers His presence and provides for our needs. As we wait, He calls on us to look around for what He's done, what He is doing, and what He's about to do. Watch for how God works.

WEEK 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. What are some of the trials, troubles, and temptations that David faced in 1 Samuel 18-22? What are some things he might have felt, thought, or experienced in these circumstances?

2. What are examples of God's provision, protection, and providential working for David in 1 Samuel 18-22?

3. Can you share about a trial where you experienced God's provision, protection, or providential work in a clear way (including through the ministry of others to you)?

4. As you read some of David's psalms from this season of his life, did anything stand out to you (about what he experienced, what he said, how he responded, etc.)?

5. Why do we sometimes miss what God is doing in us, around us, or for us? Why is it so important for us to watch or be on the lookout for ways God is at work in, around, or for us?

6. Our responses in trials—good or bad—often spring from what we believe about God. How can you take refuge in God or renew your mind with truths about God in trials and temptations?

7. How can we be a source of spiritual encouragement, support, and prayer for one another (like Jonathan and David were for each other)?

WEEK 4: WAIT ON GOD

David was transformed in trials by learning to seek after, wait on, and trust in God.

"And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand." (1 Samuel 23:4)

"Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. **7** Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." (David in Psalm 20:6-7)

- Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 23-26
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Waiting on God in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 23-26

As David continued his season in the wilderness, he faced attacks from Saul and temptations in his own heart. These chapters offer several examples of David learning to wait on God, seek God in prayer, and trust in God. But it wasn't easy. His life was on the line, and it would be tempting to take matters into his own hands. The wisdom of waiting on God is proven in these stories as God's providential work in David's life, provision for him, and protection over him are demonstrated. God works in us and for us as we wait on Him.

Read 1 Samuel 23-26

1. What did David do in 1 Samuel 23:2, 4, 10-11? Why is prayer a good first step when we're not sure what to do?

2. What do you notice from 1 Samuel 23:14? Was David's life in Saul's hands or God's hands?

3. How did Jonathan strengthen David's hand in God (1 Samuel 23:16-18)? What role did reminding David of God's promises or faithfulness play in strengthening him?

4. How is God's providence and protection evident in David's life through the events of 1 Samuel 23:25-29? How is God's providence over David's life evident in the stories of 1 Samuel 24-26?

5. In 1 Samuel 24 and 26, why did David not kill Saul when he had the chance? Why did it require waiting on God and trusting in God to let Saul live?

6. While David seemed to respond poorly at the beginning of 1 Samuel 25, how did being open to Abigail's counsel and correction help him? How is this story another example of the wisdom of waiting on God's timing rather than acting impulsively or taking matters into our own hands?

7. In 1 Samuel 24 and 26, David was sensitive to conviction about not harming Saul, and in 1 Samuel 25 he was willing to heed counsel from another and admit he almost acted unwisely (1 Samuel 25:39). What do these things demonstrate about David's walk with God? What are things you can apply or learn from this?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

David's season of waiting on God turned him into a watchman looking for how God was at work or would work to defend and deliver him. David didn't simply wait for something to change, but he learned to wait on God. As he ran to God, he found God to be his refuge. As he cried out to God, he learned that God not only heard his prayers, but God responded to prayer with His presence, provision, protection, and providential work. David's words in the psalms teach us how to wait by showing us what David rehearsed and believed about God, as well as how David sought after and cultivated his trust in God.

1. When you must wait on God, what makes waiting difficult?

2. David wrote Psalm 57 while hiding from Saul and his army in the wilderness. From Psalm 57:4, 6, what were some things David faced or felt as he waited? Why would waiting on God in these circumstances have been challenging?

3. In Psalm 57:1-3, 7-11, what are some things David did or believed to help him wait on God in faith?

4. Read Psalm 25:1-5; 27:14; 37:7-9; 38:15; 39:7; 40:1-5; 52:9; 62:1-2. What do you notice about David waiting? How might these verses guide or encourage you as you wait on God?

5. What is one thing that you can't change, fix, or solve in this season that's forcing you to wait on God? Is there anything God is teaching you or doing in, for, or through you as you wait?

6. Psalm 63 is another wilderness psalm of David. Read through the psalm and write down any actions (verbs) of David, then write down anything he said or believed about God. How do these things help you think about what you might need to do and believe as you wait on God?

Day 3: Waiting on God in Scripture

The Bible includes many stories where people chose not to wait on God and they experienced the negative consequences. There are also stories about those who did wait on and entrust themselves to God, and how it worked out for them in the end. These stories and examples, alongside encouragements and exhortations, give us many reasons for why we should wait on and trust in God. Jesus is the ultimate example of entrusting Himself to God, including in His wilderness temptation and in not defending Himself at His trial. Jesus fully entrusted Himself to the Father (at the cross) and waited on the Father's timing to vindicate and honor Him (at the resurrection and ascension). As we learn from God's people and follow Jesus, we learn to wait on and trust in our good, wise, and loving God. God's reasons to have us wait are always for our good. And God's timing and means of delivering us, changing our circumstances, or resolving our situation will also be wise and kind.

1. Can you think of any stories in the Bible where people didn't wait on God but took matters into their own hands? How did it work out for them in those stories?

2. Can you think of any stories in the Bible where God's people waited on God and trusted in God? How did it work out for them in those stories?

3. Read Proverbs 3:5-8. How might these verses teach us how to wait well? (Think of one situation in your life where you need to wait on God, then consider how Proverbs 3:5-8 might guide you.)

4. Read Lamentations 3:25-26; Isaiah 40:31; Micah 7:7; Romans 8:24-25. What do you notice about waiting on God from these verses?

5. What is one truth about God or promise of God that helps you trust God as you wait on Him?

6. What are examples of how Jesus waited on and entrusted Himself to the Father?

7. How does the work and victory of Christ help us wait on and trust God to one day fulfill all His promises? Why should this give us hope in this life but also help us wait for Christ's return as part of the answer to the Church's waiting?

WEEK 4 SUMMARY

We live in a polarized world where people ardently disagree about almost everything, but one thing that unites us all is a shared dislike for waiting. Waiting feels like time wasted. Waiting is sometimes annoying and sometimes excruciating. We don't like to wait on things to change for us or answers to come to us. We dislike waiting on others, and that includes how we often struggle to wait on God. And yet, what Scripture makes clear is that God is not only still at work *for us* and *around us* as we wait, but God does a lot of significant work *in us* as we wait.

Throughout the wilderness, David modeled submission to God's will and timing rather than taking matters into his own hands or taking shortcuts. Instead of trusting in himself or getting ahead of God, he waited on and trusted in God. Instead of avenging himself and slaying Saul, which is what David's men recommended, he waited on God's timing and means of removing Saul from the picture and putting David in the palace. Instead of trusting in his own plans or the unwise counsel of his companions, David trusted in what God had already said and entrusted God to fulfill His good purposes for David at the right time and in the proper way.

David waited on God and trusted in God, even when it wasn't easy. As he hid from Saul in caves, he wrote down these words of waiting and watching. "I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. **3** He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. *Selah* God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!" (Ps. 57:2-3). David's confidence was in God, before his circumstances ever changed, because he knew God was faithful and loving.

Just in case you think David was immediately rewarded for his faithfulness, in the next few chapters (1 Sam. 27-30), things will get so desperate that David hired his army out to the Philistines. After David was saved from Saul's hands (1 Samuel 18-23), and then David spared Saul's life (1 Samuel 24-26), David didn't experience an immediate turnaround. In fact, one of David's darkest hours and lowest moments was ahead of him (1 Sam. 30:6). But God's purposes, paths, and plan are always proven in the end. God's timing is perfect. His deliverance came not only in just the way David needed but also at just the right time. But David first had to learn to wait, watch, pray, praise, and trust in God through it all. Which means he learned to live by faith in God.

As you wait, learn to do so by faith in God. Don't just wait for circumstances to change but look to the God who is sovereign over and at work in your circumstances (current and future). Don't trust in yourself. Don't turn to anyone or anything else offering bad counsel, shortcuts, or easy solutions that counter God's Word or try to short-circuit God's timing and plan. Instead, choose to wait on God, pray to God, trust in God, praise God, and watch for Him to work on your behalf. God works for us while we wait on Him.

WEEK 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. What makes waiting (in general) difficult? What makes waiting on God difficult?

2. What's the difference in a trial between waiting for something to change and waiting on God?

3. Despite all the dangers and stresses David endured in the wilderness, how does 1 Samuel 23-26 emphasize God's deliverance, protection, and providential work in David's life?

4. What is one area of your life where you're waiting on God? What is hard about the waiting?

5. What do you need to remember or rehearse to help you trust God in the waiting? Is there anything you feel like God has been teaching you or doing in you or for you as you wait?

6. In several of the psalms that mention waiting on God, what we're called to do usually involves praying, waiting, trusting, praising, and watching. Why are those essential for God's people as they endure trials and troubles?

7. In Psalm 57, how did David pray, wait, watch, trust, and praise God?

8. How might the gospel of Christ assure us of God's steadfast love and commitment to us? Why is that important to rehearse when we must trust God in trials?

WEEK 5: RENEW YOUR HEART AND MIND

David returned to God and renewed his heart and mind in God's grace and truth.

"And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God." (1 Samuel 30:6)

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me. **8** The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands." (David in Psalm 138:7-8)

- Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 27-31
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Renewing Your Heart and Mind in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 1 Samuel 27-31

This section opens with David listening to his heart instead listening to God (1 Samuel 27:1). His discouraged, doubting thoughts led him down a path where he aligned with the Philistines and nearly found himself fighting his own people, but God providentially spared him. The Philistines sent him home, but David's army discovered that their city had been raided, their property stolen, and their families kidnapped. The men considered stoning a "greatly distressed" David. At that low moment, David turned to God and "strengthened himself in the LORD his God" (1 Samuel 30:6). With a renewed mind and refreshed heart, David sought God's guidance (1 Samuel 30:7). God not only restored everything lost to David and his men, but during all of this, God also brought an end to King Saul's life and reign. David was delivered from Saul's hands.

Read 1 Samuel 27-31

1. Read David's words to Saul in 1 Samuel 26:10, 24 and 27:1. How did David's thinking shift from what he said in 1 Samuel 26:10, 24 to what he thought in 1 Samuel 27:1?

2. Are there any clues in 1 Samuel 27 that might suggest David was not fully walking by faith in God during this part of his story? What were some of the results?

3. When the Philistines rejected David and his men and sent them back to their city of Ziklag (1 Samuel 29), how was this an example of God providentially protecting David?

4. What might this distressed David have been thinking, feeling, or experiencing when they discovered their city had been raided, families kidnapped, and his soldiers spoke of stoning him (1 Samuel 30:6)?

5. How was David turning back to God and strengthening himself in God the turning point of this part of his story? What are some immediate changes in David that reflected his return to trusting in and following God (1 Samuel 30:7-31)?

6. In 1 Samuel 30:7-20, what are examples of how God provided for and took care of David and his men? How did God work for David and keep His promises to David through Saul's defeat in 1 Samuel 31?

7. What does David state in 1 Samuel 30:23, and why is that significant?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

In 1 Samuel 27, David strayed from seeking God with his whole heart. But when overwhelmed by distress and discouragement, he returned to God and strengthened himself in God (1 Samuel 30:6). We know from many of David's psalms what it looked like for him to find his strength in God. We also know from the psalms not only what David did (whether praying, giving thanks, etc.), but we know what attributes and promises of God he rehearsed and rested in. We find encouragement in David's words to return to the Lord and experience the fullness of grace and steadfast love available to us in Christ. God not only shows us mercy, but He pours out His strength, grace, patience, and kindness on us.

1. Read Psalm 23:1-3; 32:1-5; 51:12-13. How does David describe the way God restores and renews us when we turn to Him? How does God's grace encourage us to stop straying and return to God?

2. In Psalm 138:1-3, what are some of the actions David took?

3. In Psalm 138:6-8, what are some of the actions or attributes of God mentioned? Why should these encourage us as God's people?

4. What are differences between seeking God with our "whole heart" (Psalm 138:1) and seeking God in a half-hearted way?

5. In Psalm 31:9-13, 17-20, what are some things David felt and experienced?

6. Read Psalm 31:1-8, 14-16, and 21-24. What are some things David did or believed in his trial? What are some of the actions, attributes, or promises of God that renewed and refreshed David in Psalm 31?

7. How might the ways David sought after God, or the things David rehearsed about God, in Psalm 31 and 138 have been part of how he strengthened himself in God?

Day 3: Renewing Your Heart and Mind in Scripture

The stories throughout the Bible are not of strong people doing amazing things for God, but of a strong God doing amazing things through weak, weary, and wounded people who were strengthened by God. We need God's grace and help every day. We stray, and God patiently and lovingly invites us to return to Him. God's mercy motivates our return. We don't have to hang our head low or make up for what we've done, we simply turn from our sin or straying, return to God, and rest in the grace purchased by Christ. We confess our sin while clinging to the forgiveness of sin found in Christ. As we return and rest in God's grace, He restores and renews us.

1. Read Isaiah 40:31; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Peter 1:13. What are ways we renew our minds and hearts in God?

2. What are examples of how God has demonstrated His power in the world, the Word, or in your life? How does considering the might and power of God encourage us to find our strength in Him?

3. Read Deuteronomy 3:16; Psalm 73:26; Isaiah 40:29-31; 41:10; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:13. What are things we need to remember to renew our strength in God?

4. How do the life and work of Jesus—including his betrayal and death that led to his resurrection-ascension—demonstrate that God has good purposes even through hard times?

5. Whether we have sinned, strayed, grown apathetic, or half-heartedly pursued God, how does the gospel assure us that there is grace to restore and renew us in Christ?

6. What are practical but specific things you can do this week to prioritize seeking God and finding your strength in God?

WEEK 5 SUMMARY

While in the prior chapter (1 Samuel 26), David had believed and declared that God would preserve him from King Saul's attacks, something shifted in David's thinking as 1 Samuel 27 opened. David listened to his heart, which led him to trust in his own thinking and turn to Israel's enemies. Unlike several prior stories, there's no mention of David asking or inquiring of God what to do.

Whatever David faced, this wasn't the first time his path encountered a barrier or dangers. In prior stories, God delivered or provided for David in all his difficulties. Unfortunately, David's spiritual memory bank didn't call those experiences to mind, and he let fear rather than faith have the upper hand in his heart.

These chapters give us a picture of David in a dark season, listening to his confused thoughts and feelings, which led him to join himself to the Philistines and begin a series of violent attacks to protect his army. Things go from bad to worse when the Amalekites raided David's city and kidnapped the families of David and all his men. His weary and frustrated soldiers wondered if they should stone David, and it left him feeling "greatly distressed" (1 Samuel 30:6).

But David's story reminds us that no matter how dark our situation might be (or we might feel), no matter how far off the path we've strayed, and no matter how sticky of a web we might have gotten ourselves tangled in, when we turn back to God, He is full of mercy, grace, and steadfast love. A key phrase shows us a change in David's heart and mind that is a pivotal moment in his story. "But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God" (1 Samuel 30:6). David quit straying and ran back to God. After David renewed his mind and refreshes his heart in God, immediately we see David walking by faith again as he sought the Lord's guidance (1 Samuel 30:7). David's life and words invite us to stop straying, and instead, to return to God and find our strength in Him.

God not only spared David from having to go to battle against Israel (1 Samuel 29), but God put someone in David's path who led him to find the Amalekites, defeat them, and take back the stolen properties and their families. David and his men not only don't lose anything, but this turn of events supplied them with great spoil and provision. God had taken care of David in ways he never saw coming.

David knew it wasn't mere chance that led him back to find the families of his men, and it wasn't his own army's strength that defeated the Amalekites, but it was God. He tells his soldiers that it was the Lord who preserved them and provided the spoils (1 Samuel 30:23). These words that give all the glory to God echo David's words when he was about to slay Goliath and reminded everyone that the battle belonged to the Lord (1 Samuel 17:47). David was back on a path of faith, trust, and walking in God's ways.

At the very same time, while things had seemed hopeless, God was also bringing an end to King Saul's reign through his defeat and death by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31). God had not only protected and provided for David, but the time had finally arrived where God would keep His promise and usher in the time of David's reign. The faithfulness, sovereignty, power, generosity, goodness, and grace of God shine through in David's story. We can find great hope and encouragement in knowing the same God is at work in our stories to help us as His people.

WEEK 5 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. God had declared that David would be king, so David's thoughts "in his heart" in 1 Samuel 27:1 are not in line with what God had said. Why are we on dangerous ground when we start listening to our thoughts and feelings instead of letting God's Word speak into our thoughts and feelings?

2. Read Psalm 138. What are specific things David did or believed to strengthen himself in God? How do we experience God's power in part by rehearsing and resting in His attributes and promises?

3. Why is 1 Samuel 30:6 both the low point and the turning point in this part of David's story? Why should this encourage us to turn to God, even when we've strayed?

4. Have you ever had a low moment or rock-bottom experience like David did 1 Samuel 30:6? What did you do? How does David model returning to God and finding the grace and strength needed in Him?

5. What are some examples of God being at work for David in 1 Samuel 27-31, and what do these examples reveal or emphasize about the character and work of God?

6. The events of Saul's final days in 1 Samuel 28, 31 run parallel to the events in David's life in 1 Samuel 27, 29-30. Why might these parallel accounts—where both men are unaware of what's taking place elsewhere—encourage us that God works for us in ways we don't know about, even when things feel like they're at their worst? Why might this give us hope in trials and suffering?

7. What most stood out to you or what did you learn that you can personally apply from David's story (and God's work in David's story) in 1 Samuel 27-31?

8. What is one thing you can do this week to return to God, seek after God, or find strength in God?

WEEK 6: PURSUE JOY IN GOD

David passionately pursued God as his source of joy, satisfaction, and purpose.

"And David knew that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel" (2 Samuel 5:12)

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! **2** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (David in Psalm 103:1-2)

- Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 1-6
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Pursuing Joy in God in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 1-6

In these early chapters of David's reign, as he led Israel as king, he did do so as a leader led by God. David not only secured a new capital, but he put God at the center of everything Israel would do by prioritizing the retrieval of the ark of God's presence. David's kingdom would center around the presence of God and worship of God. David not only found his joy in knowing and worshipping God, but he knew that the joy, satisfaction, and blessing Israel longed for would also only be found in God.

Read 2 Samuel 2:1-11, 3:31-6:23

1. Read 2 Samuel 4:9; 5:10-12. What did David recognize about his deliverances and successes? How did knowing this affect him?

2. How did David show his dependence on and trust in God in 2 Samuel 5:17-25? How was he leading Israel while being led and directed by God?

3. Read Exodus 25:12-15; Numbers 4:15; Deuteronomy 31:9-15. What are a couple of ways Israel disobeyed God's instructions in 2 Samuel 6:3-6?

4. After a three-month pause on the campaign to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, David went back to Scripture and learned how God had commanded the ark to be moved. Read 1 Chronicles 15:2, 11-15. What instructions did David give to move the ark according to the Law this time?

5. What can you learn from David's openness to correction and commitment to go back to Scripture to find God's wisdom and commands?

6. What were some of the ways David celebrated in 2 Samuel 6:12-23? Why do you think David was so joyful over the ark's retrieval and placement at Jerusalem?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

We've seen in prior weeks from David's psalms how he can be honest about his struggles and sorrows and yet choose to praise and thank God. In the psalms we'll read today, David talks about his passionate pursuit of God and his deep joy in God. Many of his psalms about joy and peace in God include statements about facing dangers, threats, fear, or worry within the same psalm. David teaches us that joy isn't based on circumstances, but joy is found in the God over our circumstances. Because joy is found in God, we can experience joy in all seasons and situations.

1. Read Psalm 27. What are some acts or attributes of God that David mentioned which would have made him grateful to God?

2. What are some of the ways David sought God in Psalm 27?

3. Read Psalm 16:11; 21:6; 27:4; 36:8-9; 37:3-4; 86:4-5. What do you notice about how David talks about finding joy in God?

4. Why do you think we sometimes don't experience more joy, satisfaction, or delight in God? What are things you could do to prioritize the pursuit of joy in God?

5. We've seen in prior weeks from David's psalms how he was honest about the discouragement, sorrow, and stress in life, but we see he was also a man full of joy in God. Why do you think David could be honest about both the hardships in his life and his reasons for joy?

6. Read Psalm 30:5, 11-12. What do you think David meant when he talked about weeping at night but joy coming in the morning?

7. From the words of David about seeking God or finding joy in God, what is one thing you can learn from him and apply to your life?

Day 3: Pursuing Joy in God in Scripture

The Bible is full of encouragements to seek after God with all of our heart, not half-heartedly. Scripture also tells us when we draw near to God, we experience the joy found in Him. As we consider who God is and what He's done for us, we find reason after reason to be grateful. Whether it's David in the Psalms or Paul in Philippians, gratitude and joy are often linked together, including for those walking through trials. Paul wrote Philippians from prison, and it's one of his most joy-filled letters. Likewise, on the night before his betrayal, Jesus spoke about joy several times in John 14-17. He knew that joy for His followers would ultimately come through His work for us and our abiding in Him. Because of all we have in Christ, we will always have reasons to rejoice. Pursue joy by pursuing Jesus.

1. What might it look like in our life when we're not seeking God, or what might be signs we're not seeking God with our whole heart?

2. Read Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 5:6; 6:32-34; 13:44-46; 22:37-39; Colossians 3:1-4. What are some practical things we can do to seek God?

3. What are some reasons today you have to thank God?

4. Read Philippians 1:4, 18, 25; 2:17-18, 28-29; 4:4. "Joy" or "rejoice" show up repeatedly in Paul's letter of Philippians. What are some causes of joy or rejoicing in these verses?

5. Read Luke 2:10; 10:20; John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13. How is Jesus the source of true joy?

6. What can you do this week to seek and abide with Christ to experience more of the joy found in Him?

WEEK 6 SUMMARY

David's long season of waiting for God to deliver him from Saul had finally ended. God had been faithful in preserving David through every danger. The day of being crowned king finally arrived for David, but even this involved more sorrow and waiting. David grieved over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. David was also only made king of the southern tribe of Judah, and one of Saul's sons was appointed king of Israel. David had to wait an additional seven years before he would become king of a united Israel. But through it all, David continued to wait on God and entrust himself to God.

As the new king of a united Israel, David immediately secured a new capital city in a location that would better unite the tribes. With Jerusalem established as headquarters, David prioritized seeking and worshipping God by retrieving the ark of God's presence and placing it in Jerusalem. The newly crowned king got to work doing what mattered most to him: leading the people to pursue the glory of God. As Israel's leader, he wanted the people to find their security, strength, and satisfaction in their God.

Many kings or rulers want the glory and praise for themselves, but David demonstrated his humility throughout 2 Samuel 6. He put God first and wanted Israel to celebrate God, not David. They made a mistake in not transporting the ark correctly, but David returned to God's Word and did things right the second time. This episode from 2 Samuel 6, with some insights added from 1 Chronicles, shows us the humility in David that made him open to correction and rebuke. He was a learner and sought to do things God's way. Then when David danced with joy as the ark was moved to Jerusalem, he responded to his wife's criticism with a reminder that he lived for an audience of one. He didn't care how he looked in the eyes of others because he only cared about having his eyes fully on God.

This humility of David produced gratitude to God. King David knew that every good thing in his life, both before being crowned king and now as king, came from God. This humility and gratitude sparked David's worship of God and joy in God. We not only see David's joy in God throughout his story, but his psalms are full of him testifying to his joy in God and giving us reasons for joy in God. David was a man of full of joy because he was a man focused on God.

These stories and words remind us that what ultimately robs us of joy isn't our circumstances but our pride and ingratitude. But the more we cultivate humility and gratitude, the more we will rejoice in God and worship God.

The gospel reminds us that all the reasons we have for joy ultimately come to us through and in Jesus. Jesus came to pay for our sin and save us from it so that we could be reconciled back to God by faith in Christ. Our reconciliation to God is a restoration to the joy found in Christ. Jesus makes joy possible. Jesus is our joy. Joy is found when Christ is at the center of our life. When anything else is at the center, our joy will decrease. We need more of Jesus, not more stuff from Jesus, if we want joy.

Like David, we must come back to prioritizing our pursuit of God. When we set aside the distractions, get our eyes off self or our situation, and we get our eyes on God, we experience the joy, purpose, and peace found in Him. Reclaim joy in your life by putting God at the center of your life.

WEEK 6 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. What are things we let diminish our joy, or what are reasons we might struggle to experience joy?

2. Read David's summary statement of God's care for him in 2 Samuel 4:9 (see also 1 Kings 1:29). How is that a fitting summary of David's life? Can you think of any times God has redeemed, delivered, or kept you through adversity?

3. David said Israel hadn't prioritized seeking God, but his top priority as king was retrieving the ark to put God at the center (1 Chronicles 13:1-3). When we haven't been seeking God like we should, what are ways we can prioritize pursuing God and putting Him at the center of our life?

4. David's humility was displayed when he put God (not himself) at the center of Israel's kingdom, and when he was open to correction and change after they mishandled the ark. How might humility (a right view of self before God) lead to gratitude?

5. David's humility before God and gratitude to God led to his joy in God and worship of God. Why would humility and gratitude produce greater worship and joy? How might pride and ingratitude rob us of joy?

6. Why must joy be centered on God and overflow from our worship of God? In other words, why is joy ultimately found in God and not primarily from circumstances?

7. What are practical things you can do to cultivate humility, gratitude, and joy this week?

8. What is one encouragement or challenge for you from David's story and words this week?

WEEK 7: REFLECT GOD IN YOUR ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

David reflected God in his God-given roles and relationships.

"Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always'"
(2 Samuel 9:7)

"Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.
6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O LORD." (David in Psalm 36:5-6)

- Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 7-10
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Reflecting God in Your Roles and Responsibilities in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 7-10

This period in David's life gives us a few glimpses into his role as Israel's king. The palpable passion for God and joy in God when David brought the ark to Jerusalem remains evident in his desire to build God a "house" for the ark of God's presence. Even as he won battles, David set aside or dedicated much of the spoil from his victories for a future temple. While future kings would give greater attention to their own houses, wealth, and fame, David's concern was the glory of God. Because David walked with and worshipped the God of justice, righteousness, faithfulness, steadfast love, and mercy, we notice in these stories how King David reflected to others what he had seen or received from God. Like David, as we get to know God, we can put Him on display in our roles and relationships.

Read 2 Samuel 7-10

1. What is good about David's desire to build a temple or "house" for God (2 Samuel 7:1-2)?

2. What things had God done for David and Israel that are mentioned in 2 Samuel 7:8-9, 19-24?

3. What are some of the promises of God to David in 2 Samuel 7:9-16?

4. David referred to himself as God's servant repeatedly in 2 Samuel 7:18-29. How did David's view of who he was, and who God was, set him up to lead Israel well?

5. How might we be a blessing to those around us if we lived with an awareness of who God is as well as His desire to build others up through us, His kingdom servants?

6. Read 2 Samuel 8:6, 14. Who was responsible for putting down David's enemies and giving him victory?

7. What attributes of God did David reflect in his leadership of Israel in 2 Samuel 8:15? What attributes of God does David reflect in his kindness to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9?

8. How might 2 Samuel 9 give us an Old Testament glimpse into the gospel of grace? How has God treated you in ways that parallel how David treated Mephibosheth?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

Reading David's psalms alongside of his story helps connect the dots between his actions and his motivation. For example, in 2 Samuel 7-10, we read a few examples of how King David faithfully represented God, the true King. And when we read David's psalms, we notice how much he meditated on and wrote about the attributes and acts of God that he reflected (even if imperfectly). Because David thought so often about the righteousness, faithfulness, and steadfast love of God, it should be no surprise that these are things David reflected as king. He could only show to others what he first received from and saw in God. Because God poured out mercy and kindness on David, he could show mercy and kindness to others. David led and served, not only in God's strength, but he did so by beholding and worshipping God in such a way that it changed him. He led as a good king and brought blessings on those around him as he reflected who God was and how God had treated him.

1. The word translated "kindness" in 2 Samuel 9 can also be translated as "mercy" or "steadfast love." It refers to God's committed, unchanging, and gracious love toward His people. Read Psalm 13:5; 21:7; 23:6; 31:6-7; 32:10; 143:8. What do you notice about God's steadfast love in David's life?

2. How might God's steadfast love, mercy, and kindness toward David have caused him to reflect that steadfast love, mercy, and kindness to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9?

3. Read Psalm 11:7; 33:4-5; 36:5-6; 37:28-29. How might considering the justice and righteousness of God be both a comforting and challenging thing for God's people?

4. How did David credit God for victory over his enemies in Psalm 18:3; 16-17, 47-48; 31:7-8; 54:7; 138:7-8? How might that consistent awareness that God was the source of his protection and blessing have deepened David's trust in God and gratitude to God?

5. Can you think of any times in your past where God protected, blessed, strengthened, or helped you?

6. What are some reasons underneath David's praise of God the King in Psalm 8:1-4? How does David view mankind's role on behalf of God in Psalm 8:5-9?

Day 3: Reflecting God in Your Roles and Responsibilities in Scripture

God created Adam and Eve as His image-bearers, to walk with Him but also to rule and reign as His representatives on Earth. While sin marred the image of God in mankind, whenever God redeems people to Himself, He also calls them to know and walk with Him and to reflect Him. Those in Christ are not only reconciled to God, but we're commissioned as God's kingdom-ambassadors. God has put us in roles and relationships in part so we can help others better see and know God. We don't do that perfectly, but the more we see and delight in Christ, the more the Spirit transforms us to be like Christ and reflect Christ. Jesus not only defeated our enemies, set us free from sin, given us new life, made us sons and daughters of God, but Jesus also enlists us as His kingdom citizens who make that kingdom visible to those around us.

1. List below some of the specific roles and relationships in your life today.

2. Read Genesis 1:26-28; 12:1-3; Exodus 19:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:20; 6:16-7:1. What are ways that God's people are called to know and reflect God? How does this help those far from God have a better understanding of who God is and what He desires for human beings to flourish?

3. Read Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3:9-14, 17, 23-24; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 4:10. What are ways these verses give us wisdom on how to reflect God in our roles and relationships?

4. Why is remembering who God is and how He relates to us so important for how we then relate to and treat others?

5. How do we know Jesus is the true Son of David who reigns on an eternal throne and fulfills the promises of the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7:9-16?

6. Read Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 32:4; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 3:21-26; Revelation 19:11-16. What are reasons we need to remember that God is a righteous and just king? Why is it significant that Christ not only won victory for us, but He will also administer justice and righteousness in full one day?

WEEK 7 SUMMARY

King David was no self-made man. Every victory and blessing came from God. Not only does the narrator make this clear (2 Samuel 8:5, 14), but David praised God because of it (2 Samuel 7:18-24). David's hope and confidence were in God, not self. He believed in God's blessing, not good luck or happy coincidences.

David not only praised God for the protection and provision in his life, but David's psalms show us a man who constantly thought about the attributes and actions of God. His trust in trials or when facing threats came from knowing the Almighty God who powerfully worked on his behalf. The way David led Israel with justice, righteousness, and generosity flowed out of his knowledge of the God who loved justice and righteousness and who exhibited great generosity toward His people. When David considered the mercy, faithfulness, and steadfast love of God toward him—despite how undeserving he was—it left David eager to go show the same kindness and faithfulness to those around him.

David models how we live out our God-given and Christ-purchased identity as image-bearers and ambassadors. We live, not for ourselves, but for the glory of God. But we also live to reflect the glory, goodness, and grace of God in our lives through the specific roles and relationships God put us in. David did that as a shepherd early in his life and he did it as a king in this segment of his life. His roles changed, but whatever circumstances he was in, because he walked with God, he was able to reflect God.

We are called to live in the same way. We not only have a new identity in Christ as sons and daughters of God, but we're given great purpose. We have the privilege and responsibility of reflecting Christ and His kingdom in everyday life. As we get to know Christ, the Spirit makes us more like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:9-12). As we meditate on who God is, how He acts, and how He relates to us, we mirror to others what we see in God. While we don't do it perfectly, we can faithfully reflect God in our roles and relationships because Christ died to defeat our spiritual enemies and free us from sin's rule. As we worship Christ, and as we walk with Christ, our lives will gradually look different. We will put on display the beauty of the true King and His everlasting kingdom to the world around us.

Understanding our God-given role should infuse our lives with significance, even, maybe especially, in the ordinary. Whether at work, school, home, the neighborhood, community, or with family or friends, when we fight our sin and pursue Christ, when we live for His kingdom (and not our own kingdom), and when we reflect the patience, kindness, grace, and love of God to others, they will gain a glimpse into Christ's kingdom. They will see the King through the citizens of the kingdom.

This section from 2 Samuel also includes the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7). Some of God's promises are fulfilled in part when Solomon became king, but the covenant and promises as a whole point to Jesus, the Son of David. While David only partially and imperfectly reflected God, Jesus perfectly represented and reflected His Father. Jesus ushered in a heavenly kingdom that is embodied in His citizens and ambassadors on Earth. When Jesus rose from the grave and ascended to heaven, he sat on the throne of David at the Father's right hand, from which Christ reigns and rules over all things even now (Acts 2:29-36; Romans 1:3-4). As we submit to, represent, and reflect Christ the King in our roles and relationships, we embody and extend Christ's kingdom on Earth.

While we don't fulfill the same role as David did as Israel's king, all those in Christ are made citizens of His kingdom. As we abide with Christ and behold Christ, the Spirit of God transforms us so we reflect Christ more in our own relationships and roles. Our identity fuels our mission and purpose.

WEEK 7 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. David responded to God's Word and works toward him (2 Samuel 7:4-17) with gratitude and thanksgiving (2 Samuel 7:18-29). What are truths God has encouraged you with or things God has done for you over the years that you can thank Him for today?

2. Why is cultivating an awareness of what God has done for us, and then praising and thanking God for those things, so important for increasing our trust in God and joy in God?

3. God's victory through David's defeat of Israel's enemies—and the peace or rest it gave Israel—points to the greater victory of God through Christ's defeat of our enemies (sin, death, and spiritual enemies). Read Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Colossians 1:13-14; 2:13-15; 1 John 3:18. How should Christ's victory for us encourage us to fight sin, walk in freedom, and reflect God's kingdom?

4. How did David fulfill his role as God's king by reflecting God in 2 Samuel 8-9?

5. What are ways that David's treatment of Mephibosheth pictured how God treats us in Christ?

6. As God's image-bearers, ambassadors of Christ, and citizens of His kingdom, we're called to know and reflect Christ. What are some of the roles and relationships God has you in? How have you or could you be intentional about fulfilling your role as Christ's representative to those around you?

7. How might viewing ourselves in this way, seeing the identity and calling we have as those who (imperfectly) represent and reflect God, give greater purpose and meaning to everyday life?

8. How might David's story and words, as well as what we read in the New Testament, remind us that the greatest way to grow in reflecting God is by knowing and delighting in God? Or how does *beholding* Christ (knowing Him) lead to *becoming like* Christ (reflecting Him)?

9. How can others pray for you this week to better know and treasure Christ but then also to reflect Him to those around you in your words and actions?

WEEK 8: TURN FROM TEMPTATION AND SIN

David responded to temptation and sin through confession, repentance, and embracing the grace of God in the gospel.

"David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.' (2 Samuel 12:13)

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. **2** Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." (David in Psalm 32:1-2)

- Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 11-12
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Turning from Temptation and Sin in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 11-12

While 2 Samuel 5-9 showed us how David pursued and reflected God, 2 Samuel 11 opens with an ominous tone as David sat back at his palace when he should have led his men on the battlefield. Instead of seeking God and reflecting God, in this story, David pursued his sinful desires in taking another man's wife and then killing the man. Instead of immediately confessing his sin, he tried to hide it. But God saw everything and was displeased by it all (2 Samuel 11:27). God graciously sent Nathan to confront David, not to shame or punish him, but to bring his sin into the light so David could confess it, turn from it, and be forgiven of it. All of us are tempted by sin. Sin begins with our own desires and thoughts. We must learn how to fight temptation in God's strength the moment our desires steer us away from God. But we must also learn how to respond when we do sin. God's mercy calls us out of our sin, so that as we confess and repent of it, we can be forgiven and freed by the grace of God purchased for us at the cross of Christ.

Read 2 Samuel 11-12

1. How might boredom, inactivity, and restlessness have played a role in David's temptation and sin (2 Samuel 11:1-3)? When you're bored or restless, what are things you're tempted to fill your time, mind, or heart with that don't help you walk with God?

2. What are ways that David responded poorly after sinning (2 Samuel 11:6-27)?

3. While it might have seemed like David's sin was hidden or that he "got away with it," what does 2 Samuel 11:27 state? How might 2 Samuel 12 assure us that eventually all sin catches up to us?

4. What are ways we try to hide, justify, minimize, or deny our sin?

5. David finally did what he should have done right away when he confessed his sin against God (2 Samuel 11:12). Why is coming clean to God in confession and repentance always a much better option than hiding our sin?

6. What are a couple temptations for you in this season? What do you think might be the underlying desires beneath those temptations?

7. Throughout his life, David's strength in any battle or trial had to come from God if he wanted victory. The problem is David didn't resist temptation by seeking God's strength or God's way of escape in 2 Samuel 11. Why are we doomed to fail if we fight temptation in our own strength? What are ways that God helps, equips, and empowers us to fight sin?

8. What is one practical thing you can do this week to fight temptation and sin in God's power?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

While David's narrative only tells us that he said, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13), Psalms 32 and 51 offer us insight into what confession and repentance looked like for David. These psalms reveal how he humbly but honestly confessed and turned from his sin against God. These psalms also emphasize the mercy, grace, and forgiveness of God given to us when we do confess our sin. David didn't have to stay stuck in sin or be haunted by shame because he received the full cleansing of sin and restoration to joy in God's presence that forgiveness provided. David's words give us words to pray when we need to confess specific sins or our sinfulness, but his words also remind us of the blessing of walking in the forgiveness and freedom Christ provides in the gospel.

1. David spoke about the effects of hiding his sin in Psalm 32:3-4. Have you ever tried to hide your sin or stayed in sin instead of repenting of it? How did you feel, or what negative effects did you experience? When you did repent of sin (Psalm 32:5-11), what were some blessings you experienced?

2. Read Psalm 51 and record anything that stands out to you from reading this psalm.

3. In Psalm 51:1-6, how did David describe his sin and his sinfulness? How did he confess and take ownership for his sin rather than minimizing, excusing, or justifying his sin?

4. In Psalm 51:7-12[2], what are things David requested that God would do for him?

5. How are confession of our sin and clinging to God's grace part of how we experience a restoration of joy (Psalm 51:12)?

6. What are some of the responses of David after confessing his sin and being cleansed (see Psalm 51:13-19)? What might it look like for you to give thanks to God, tell others about God's mercy, and walk humbly before God after repentance?

7. Read Psalm 51:16-17. What do these verses communicate about the importance of a repentant heart that's broken over sin and not just outward religious deeds?

8. As you read Psalm 51, are there any sins you need to confess? Do you need to pray for a spirit of brokenness of your sinfulness, a clean heart, restoration, or for something else from this psalm?

[2] While the Spirit sometimes temporarily filled God's people in the Old Testament for specific purposes, after Jesus was raised and ascended, He sent the Holy Spirit to permanently reside in every believer. Every Christian is made alive, indwelt, and sealed by the Spirit. The Spirit can't be lost, taken, or removed from believers. We can grieve the Holy Spirit. Because our sin can create a rift in our walk with God, repentance is how we forsake sin and take it God so He can cleanse and restore us.

Day 3: Turning from Temptation and Sin in Scripture

The Bible offers us a lot of wisdom and encouragement when it comes to resisting sin and repenting of sin. We want to fight sin and flee evil as soon as temptation rears its ugly head. But the Bible also tells us how to respond when we do sin. God doesn't want us to hide, minimize, ignore, or excuse our sin. He also doesn't want us to be crushed by guilt and shame because of it. He invites us to confess our sin and turn from it, returning to God and finding in Christ forgiveness and cleansing. We should confess our sin, and when we do so, we should cling to the grace given in Christ. Because of God's grace, purchased by Christ's blood, we can walk in the light and find strength to stay in the battle against temptation and sin.

1. Why is desire itself not sinful? What are some good desires? How might we recognize good desires versus sinful desires?

2. Read James 1:14-15 and Romans 12:1-2. Why is it important to fight sin at the level of our thoughts and desires (in addition to fighting at the level of words and ctions)?

3. Read Psalm 119:11; Matthew 6:13; Romans 6:11-14; 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 6:10-11; James 4:7. What are some things you notice from these verses about how to resist sin and pursue righteousness?

4. Read 1 John 1:5-10; James 5:16; Acts 19:18; Matthew 18:15. Why might we sometimes need to confess sin to a fellow believer? Are there any temptations and sins you've kept to yourself that you need to tell another Christian about to help you walk in the light?

5. When we sin, we're told that we can and should confess and repent of those sins—turn away from them and to turn to God (1 John 1:9-2:2). How does the gospel of grace in Christ encourage or motivate us to repent of sin and return to God?

6. Every person will to some degree disappoint us because all people are sinners. Why should this make us all the more thankful for Jesus and put our hope in Him alone?

WEEK 8 SUMMARY

Jesus taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13). He urged his disciples to be watchful and prayerful so they would not be tempted (Matthew 26:41). We should seek to avoid temptation where possible. We should do everything in our power to guard our heart and mind so that sin does not find easy inroads to tempt us.

But if temptation does come, flee it the moment it arrives. When it knocks on your door, close the door immediately. When temptation gets in front of you, turn around and run. The Bible often uses the language of fleeing or running from temptation (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). Part of the fight against sin is avoiding getting into the ring.

The Bible also uses a lot of warfare language when it comes to resisting the temptations that we can't or didn't avoid. We're not told to be neutral with our sin or at peace with our sin but to kill our sin by the power of the Spirit (Romans 8:13). We're to take up the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17). Paul reminds us we're engaged in warfare, and that war includes destroying wrong thinking opposed to the right knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). The Holy Spirit lives in and empowers believers to resist and fight sin, knowing that there is always a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13). We must set our eyes on Christ, finding our joy and satisfaction in Him so that all temptations and idols lose their appeal.

While the Bible calls us to avoid and resist temptation, it acknowledges we won't do this perfectly in this life. John tells us we should walk in the light as God is in the light, but he also says if we say we do this perfectly and have no sin, we're liars (1 John 1:5-10). Thankfully, when we do sin, God has provided through the perfect work of His Son, a way for us to be cleansed and forgiven. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Jesus died to set us free from both the penalty and power of sin. We can now say no to sin in a way we could not before being in Christ and being indwelt by the Spirit. As Christians, we're called not to defeat sin on our own, but to walk in the victory Jesus has already won. But the gospel also assures us that when we do fail or fall, it's Christ's work that picks us up off the floor, washes us clean, and restores us to God. We don't hide or deny our sin, we confess it. We confess it because Christ's blood forgives and cleanses us, but we also confess it to be rid of sin so we experience more of the joy and peace in God.

The gospel then motivates us to not sin, but it also motivates our repentance and return to God when we do sin. All of it is about Christ's work for us, not our work for Him. The power to resist sin and the mercy given to us after we sin both come from the grace in Christ and nothing in us or done by us.

We sometimes think of confession as drudgery, or as wiping our face in our mess, but confession is a gift from God. Through confession we can come clean and walk in the light, be freed, restored, cleansed, and enjoy God again. It's how we move from our sin to God's grace.

David shows us how to fight sin by how he failed to fight sin. He also gives us an example of what it looks like to vainly try to cover sin, but the beauty of confessing sin and clinging to God's grace. We can learn how to experience God's grace in resisting sin on the front end, but also how to experience grace when we must repent of sin. When we deny or hide our sin, we reject God's grace and choose to walk in guilt. But when we confess our sin, we embrace a life of gratitude for God's grace.

WEEK 8 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. How do boredom, inactivity, comfort, and ease often set us up for greater temptation?

2. Why should we resist temptation early and not let it linger or grow?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Why is it so important to believe this when you're tempted by sin?

4. What are wrong ways we might respond to our own sin (instead of confession and repentance)?

5. Why was it a gracious thing of God to send Nathan to expose David's sin and lead him to repentance? Why is it a gracious thing when God reveals our sin or brings conviction of sin upon us?

6. From Psalms 32 and 51, what did you learn about confessing sin or the benefits of confession?

7. Why should confession and repentance be a daily spiritual discipline (rhythm of grace)? How do you cultivate this spirit of brokenness that leads to daily repentance?

8. Why must confession and repentance be tethered to rehearsing and resting in the gospel?

9. Have you ever experienced God giving you partial victory over a sin or making progress in not being defeated by a specific temptation or sin? Share the example. What are a couple of things that God used to help you grow in this area?

10. Is there any sin you need to confess today? How do you need prayer as you fight temptation and sin, or as you cultivate confession of sin and repentance?

WEEK 9: ENTRUST ALL THINGS TO GOD

David entrusted his kingdom, family, reputation, safety, and circumstances fully to God.

"It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today." (2 Samuel 16:12)

"To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. **2** O my God, in you I trust." (David in Psalm 25:1-2)

- Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 13-18
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Entrusting All Things to God in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 13-18

Instead of actively leading his family and kingdom, King David failed to address the sins, strains, and hurts that took place in his family. It led to his son, Absalom, revolting against his father. Not only did David's son rebel against him and take his city, but some of his closest advisors and friends betrayed him. David was forced to flee into the wilderness for the second time. But instead of responding with anger, bitterness, or by taking matters into his own hands, he entrusted himself, his kingdom, and his situation to God. God's plans for David would have to come to fruition, not David's plans. And through this second trial in the wilderness, we see again God's faithfulness to His people in the many ways He took care of, protected, provided for, and fulfilled His purposes for David. We are encouraged to surrender and entrust ourselves, and everything in our lives, to God, fully trusting in Him and waiting on Him like David did.

Read 2 Samuel 13-18

1. What are ways that David was passive with his family and kingdom rather than leading them with intentionality? What might be some of the reasons for David's passivity?

2. What are similarities and differences between David's first and second seasons in the wilderness (1 Samuel 21-31; 2 Samuel 15-19)?

3. Who was Ahithophel (see 2 Samuel 15:12; 16:23)? What did David pray for in 2 Samuel 15:21? How did God answer David's prayer very specifically in 2 Samuel 17?

4. Read 2 Samuel 15:25-26; 16:11-14. How did David demonstrate that he was fully entrusting himself and his situation to God? Why would this have been hard to do in these circumstances?

5. We've seen throughout David's story how God providentially provided what he would need at the right time. How was Hushai part of God's plans to protect David in 2 Samuel 15:32-36; 17? How did God use people like Shobi and Machir (2 Samuel 17:27-29) to provide for and strengthen David's army? What do these stories remind us about God's faithfulness, provision, and protection in trials?

6. Who delivered David from his trial in 2 Samuel 18:19? Why do you think 1-2 Samuel continually emphasize this throughout David's story?

7. How do these chapters highlight God's faithfulness to His promises, God's commitment to His purposes, and God's compassion and kindness to David in his brokenness? What hope, strength, and encouragement can you find in the reminders of who God is and will be to His people?

8. What is one trial or hard situation in your life today? How can you fully entrust it to God?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

Because David wrote many psalms in the wilderness, we have a lot we can draw from to understand how he strengthened and refreshed himself in God (2 Samuel 17:14). His psalms model a life of praying to, waiting on, and trusting in God. These psalms continually rehearse the attributes of God and the acts of God, experienced in the past and expected in the present and future. God takes care of, guides, and provides for His people even in the most desolate wilderness or the darkest valley. David's words in the psalms offer us hope and encouragement as we set our hearts and minds on our good Shepherd watching over us, leading us, and taking care of us.

1. When David was in trouble and surrounded, what are some things he did and believed in Psalm 3?

2. In Psalm 62:1-2, 5-8, what did David remember to help him wait on God and entrust himself to God?

3. What are a couple of things David mentioned in Psalm 62:9-10 that he would have been tempted to trust in (instead of trusting in God)? In trials and temptations today, what are we tempted to trust in?

4. David mentioned lifting up his soul to God (Psalm 25:1) as a way of trusting in God (Psalm 25:2) and waiting on God (Psalm 25:3). What do you think it means to lift yourself up to God or to entrust yourself over to God?

5. Read Psalm 23. Does anything from it stand out to you now that you know more of David's story?

6. Read 2 Samuel 17:27-29. Considering this instance in David's life where God provided for his needs in the wilderness, why might Psalm 23:5 have been such a personal and meaningful truth to him?

7. What is a situation in your life where you cannot foresee or imagine how it might work out for your good or how provision will come your way? Pray over and entrust this situation to God, then find courage and hope in knowing the truth of Psalm 23:5 is still true today.

8. What are truths about who God is that you need to remember as you pray, wait, and trust?

Day 3: Entrusting All Things to God in Scripture

1-2 Samuel began with Hannah's example of entrusting herself and her beloved child to God. She was a barren woman who prayed for a son. When Samuel was born to Hannah, she praised God, but then she "lent" Samuel back to God. She surrendered, handed over, or entrusted Samuel fully to God, believing God would take care of whatever was put in His care. It's a great example of what we can do with our lives, children, finances, future, relationships, or even our fears and worries. We release control and hand all these things to God, knowing He alone can take care of things. Jesus also fully entrusted himself to the Father, not only at his temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4), but when he was betrayed, put on trial, wrongfully accused, and endured terrible suffering at the cross (Matthew 26-27). Peter encouraged us to consider how Jesus entrusted himself to the Father so that we will follow suit in entrusting ourselves to God (1 Peter 4:19). Whether it's Hannah and Samuel, David, or Jesus, all these stories demonstrate how God ultimately takes care of whatever and whoever is entrusted to Him.

1. Read 1 Samuel 1:21-28. What would have been hard about Hannah "lending" Samuel to God? Was God faithful in caring for and blessing Samuel (the one "lent" to God)?

2. How might Hannah's story of entrusting Samuel to God help you entrust things to God, whether children or grandchildren, finances, jobs, a trial, or your future?

3. Why is it so difficult to release control of things that are important to us?

4. Read Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7. What do these verses teach you about trusting God or entrusting something to God?

5. Read 1 Peter 2:18-25; 4:19. How did Jesus, throughout his life but especially in his death, entrust Himself to the Father? How does Jesus model entrusting ourselves and our circumstances to God?

6. What is one thing you need to entrust to God (fully) today? Spend a moment in prayer giving this situation, person, need, or circumstances to God.

WEEK 9 SUMMARY

Nathan had announced God's judgment on King David's sin, warning him that because he used the sword against Uriah, the sword would never depart from David's own household (2 Samuel 12:9-12). When Absalom saw his father, David, fail to vindicate his daughter (Tamar) and deal with the sins of his son (Amnon), he was convinced that David was unworthy to be king. Absalom betrayed his father by deceptively winning the hearts of many of his fellow Israelites over to his side and against the king. Absalom's power and influence grew until King David was forced to flee Jerusalem to spare its citizens. David's most trusted counselor, the wise Ahithophel, also betrayed him.

Embarrassed, ashamed, and sorrowful, David left Jerusalem and ascended the Mount of Olives, walking the path Jesus would later walk when betrayed (Matthew 26:30). David entered the wilderness again, praying for God to do what only He could do in protecting and delivering him (2 Samuel 15:31).

Throughout this second tour in the wilderness, David continually entrusted himself to God. He didn't give in to fear, anxiety, or despair. He didn't take matters into his own hands or take vengeance on those who wronged him. He surrendered everything over to God. He entrusted himself, his kingdom, and his future to God. David's psalms show us what truths about God he meditated on in this season. As David considered why God was worthy of his trust, he experienced peace and strength through it all. David rested in God. "I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me. **6** I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around" (Psalm 3:5–6). He could sleep because his situation was in God's hands. Those who set themselves against David were no match for the God who surrounded him. Salvation belonged to God (Psalm 3:8).

David set his heart and mind on what he knew to be true about God when he was unsure what was true about his circumstances or his future. He remembered why God was rock-solid and trustworthy when the rest of life felt unstable. David's faith could have shriveled up if he hadn't rooted himself in God's faithfulness and God's promises. He might easily have missed the ways God was at work if his eyes were stuck on his circumstances rather than being watchful for what God was doing or revealing.

David entrusted himself fully to God. God must defend and deliver him from Absalom's sword. God must give solace and support to David after Ahithophel's betrayal. God must exonerate and encourage him after Shimei's accusations. And David's impulse was to believe God's stored up mercy and love would shower down on him.

What we see in these stories is the faithfulness of God proven to David as he trusted in God. God protected David. God provided for David through people put on his path at the right time. God spread a table for David in the wilderness. God answered his prayers by giving favor to his friend Hushai in Absalom's court and thwarting the counsel of Ahithophel. God ultimately vindicated and delivered David while removing Absalom from power, just as He had done for David when Saul was nipping at his heels.

David's story reminds us that the best thing we can do in any season is to fully entrust ourselves to God. The thing we so desperately want to control is the very thing we need to surrender. The good news is that God is faithful and wise with everything entrusted to Him. He will take care of us just as He did David. He will keep His promises and prove His steadfast love and grace in our stories just as He did in David's story. Pray, wait, and trust as you entrust yourself to the fully trustworthy God.

WEEK 9 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. Why is it hard to entrust ourselves, our situation, our security, our future, or our families to God?

2. How did David's passivity and failure to act in the lives of his children ultimately create more problems for him and the kingdom in 2 Samuel 13-14? Why should this motivate us to humbly but intentionally address glaring issues in our family, friends, workplace, or church?

3. Read 2 Samuel 16:5-14. How would David have been tempted to respond (poorly) to the curses and assaults on him? How did he model entrusting himself and his situation fully to God?

4. What would it look like for you to practically entrust some of these things to God: your family, work, finances, future, health, a decision, a hard person to be around, a temptation, or a trial?

5. Have you ever been wronged, falsely accused, lied about, or mistreated by someone? What are ways we might want to respond in these situations that wouldn't honor God? How do examples like David (2 Samuel 16:5-14) or Jesus (1 Peter 2:23; 4:9) teach us how to respond by trusting in God and entrusting that person and our situation over to God?

6. What are some things or people God used to take care of David in the wilderness (2 Samuel 15-18)?

7. From Psalms 3, 23, or 62, what are truths about God or promises of God that David found hope and encouragement in? Why should those same truths and promises encourage us today as God's people?

8. What is one thing you need to entrust to God in this season? How can others pray for you as you entrust this situation or person to God?

9. What is one thing from this part of David's story that encouraged or challenged your walk with God?

WEEK 10: LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

David left a spiritual legacy by investing his time, assets, and energy into what mattered most.

"O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. **19** Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision." (1 Chronicles 29:18-19)

"One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple." (David in Psalm 27:4)

- Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 21-24, 1 Kings 1-2, 1 Chronicles 21-29
- Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms
- Day 3: Leaving a Lasting Legacy in Scripture
- Discussion Guide

Day 1: David's Story in 2 Samuel 21-24, 1 Kings 1-2, 1 Chronicles 21-29

1 Chronicles gives us many details about how David spent the final season of his life preparing Solomon to lead Israel and build a magnificent temple for God. This passion to see God dwell among His people and be worshipped by the people had been on David's heart for years. He set aside materials and treasures, wrote down the plans, and gave order and instructions to the many groups involved in the temple. And he spent time with Solomon, walking through the details, explaining why every element mattered. David died with a heart ablaze for the spread of God's glory, which is how he had lived his whole life. He left a spiritual legacy to Solomon, to Israel, and even to us today as readers of Scripture, because he pursued God, found his strength in God, and invested his life in the things of God.

Read 2 Samuel 22-24, 1 Chronicles 22, 28-29

1. Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16; 1 Chronicles 22:6-10; 28:5-8. How did David see the ascension of Solomon as another example of God keeping His promises?

2. What are ways David responded rightly after feeling conviction for his sin in 2 Samuel 24:10-25?

3. Read 2 Samuel 24:24-25 and 1 Chronicles 22:1. What was the significance of the site David purchased and built an altar on?

4. After reading these various stories from the final season of King David's life, what are ways he gave his time and attention to setting Israel up for health and a right pursuit of God?

5. Read some of the final exhortations and encouragements of King David to Solomon in 1 Chronicles 22:6-16; 28:8-10, 19-21. What stands out to you about David's words to Solomon?

6. Read 1 Chronicles 22:2-5; 28:1-9; 29:1-20. What stands out to you about David's final words and actions to the people of Israel?

7. David spent the final season of his life preparing Solomon to lead Israel, encouraging Israel to support Solomon, and making the plans to ensure the temple would be built. How might David model to us the important of investing in the things that matter most?

8. Read 1 Chronicles 22:11, 16; 28:20. How was David's emphasis on Solomon's success being tied to God being "with him" consistent with David's pattern throughout his life of giving God all the credit for his deliverances, victories, and blessings? What might we learn from this?

Day 2: David's Words in the Psalms

The author of 1-2 Samuel put one of David's psalms near the end of his story in 2 Samuel 22 (see Psalm 18). It's a psalm about who God had been for David through the ups and downs of his life. Similarly, the final psalm ascribed to David (Psalm 145) was a song full of praise. The five concluding psalms (Psalms 146-150) are also songs of praise. Praise is a fitting end to David's story, the book of Psalms, and our study. Whatever David walked through, he did so with God. He experienced God's care, provision, protection, mercy, steadfast love, and faithfulness throughout his life. David was a man after God's heart, in part, because God had captured David's heart. God's glory was at the center of David's story, his desire for the kingdom of Israel, the psalms he penned, and his spiritual legacy. We should also live with a passion to know God, to praise God, and to spread His glory to those around us.

1. In Psalm 18 (2 Samuel 22), what are things David mentioned that God had done or been for him?

2. Read Psalm 23:6; 27:4; 63:1-2; 65:4; 132:1-5. From these verses, what are reasons why David might have been so passionate about their being a glorious temple to God in the capital city of Jerusalem?

3. Read Psalm 145. What are some of the reasons that David praised God in Psalm 145?

4. Why do you think it's significant that David's last psalm, and the last five psalms (146-150), all focus entirely on praising God? What might this teach us?

5. Write down five reasons to thank and praise God for who He is and five reasons to praise and thank God for something He's done.

6. What is one way you can grow in either talking more honestly to God in prayer, or building more thanksgiving and praise into your prayer life?

7. Now that you've spent more time reading the psalms of David, and doing so in the context of learning his story, what are some things you've learned from his psalms?

Day 3: Leaving a Lasting Legacy in Scripture

Not only did David model living and dying with a passion for God's glory, but the rest of Scripture shows us the beauty of a life lived for God rather than for self. The Bible encourages us to not just invest in material things but to invest in things of eternal significance, such as the people around us or in the Church. Parents and grandparents, mentors and disciple makers, and those who lead or serve in the Church are all invited to invest themselves in others and share the ways God has been gracious, kind, and faithful in their lives. If we want to leave a spiritual legacy that lasts, we should guard ourselves from distractions and give ourselves to the things that matter most. God is worthy of praise in our life, our words, our death, and in those we influence for Christ's kingdom. May God get all the glory.

1. What is the difference between living for our glory and living for God's glory?

2. Part of David's desire for the temple was to see others worship God and live for His glory. Read Psalm 71:8; Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:10-11. What do these verses tell you about how to live each day? What are practical ways to do these things?

3. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:4-8; Matthew 6:19-21; Galatians 6:8-10; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2:1-2. How do these verses give examples of the things and people we can invest in?

4. Write out 5-8 things you'd like to invest yourself in for the rest of your life or the kind of spiritual legacy you'd like to leave behind you.

5. Building on what you wrote above, what can you start doing today to aim your life in that direction?

6. Read Romans 11:33-36; 16:25-27; Ephesians 3:20-21; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Peter 3:18. Considering these words of praise to God and how Psalms ends in praise to God, write out or pray a few lines of thanksgiving and praise to God for His goodness, grace, and glory.

WEEK 10 SUMMARY

We've spent the last 10 weeks reading about David's life, his words in his psalms, and how the rest of Scripture builds on key themes from his story. When you read the overlapping narratives of 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 1 Chronicles together, you get a more holistic picture of how David spent his final years. We get an image of a man physically tiring out and losing his strength as death approached (1 Kings 1), but a man who also finished well by making provisions for the temple, preparing Solomon to lead as a godly king, and praising God for His steadfast love poured out on him throughout his life (1 Chronicles 21-29). David looked back over his life and described the faithfulness of God through it all: "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity" (1 Kings 1:29).

The narrator of 2 Samuel placed a psalm of David at the end of his life (2 Samuel 22; Psalm 18). It recounted God's faithfulness and power at work and through him. Every blessing and victory belonged to God. David's psalm praised the God who was his Savior, strength, and shepherd in every mountain and valley. The narrator then included David's words that looked to the future. As both a king and prophet, he spoke to the everlasting nature of God's covenant with him that assured his house would stand forever (2 Samuel 23:1–7). He lived and died resting in God's promises, and his throne and line point us to the complete fulfillment of all God's promises in David's true heir, Jesus.

Second Samuel concludes David's story with a story about his sin in taking a census. A king wasn't supposed to put his trust in the size of his army or citizens. God had given Moses specific instructions of what to do when a census was taken (Exodus 30:12-16). Whether it was his failure to do the census correctly or his pride or fear that led to the census, the narrative makes clear that David was wrong in his actions. Joab warned the king he didn't need to take a census (2 Samuel 24:3). After he had numbered the people, David's heart "struck him" or convicted him (2 Samuel 24:10). David not only confessed his sin and asked for mercy (2 Samuel 24:10), but he became a sort of priest interceding for the sins of the people (2 Samuel 24:17). David bought a significant piece of land on Mount Moriah to make a sacrifice. God received the sacrifice, ended the plague on Israel, and extended mercy to David (2 Samuel 24:25). The site purchased would become the home of the temple (1 Chronicles 22:1). David's story then ends by pointing us to his work for the future temple of God, the passion of David's heart that would outlast him.

The final chapters of 1 Chronicles (see 1 Chronicles 22-29) go into detail about the many things David did to ensure a temple for God's glory would be built. While most kings throughout history have been preoccupied with building up monuments, cities, or kingdoms to make their name great, David's passion was that God's glory would be made known and His name would be great, both among Israel and the nations. David lived life by faith in God, but he also lived it for the glory of God.

David's story encourages us to invest our time, energy, and assets into the things that matter most. Our goal isn't merely to leave material possessions behind us but to leave a spiritual legacy that outlasts us. We want to live with a passion for Jesus, the true temple of God, and with a desire that others would see and know the glory of Christ.

David's story, his psalms, and his death and legacy all reveal the grace and glory of the God who was present and powerful in David's story. The goal of the authors wasn't that we would walk away thinking that David was a great king but that he served a great God. We should see ourselves in David's story and learn what it means to walk with God in every season, to live a life for God's glory rather than our own, and to invest ourselves into the things and people so we leave a spiritual legacy that lasts.

WEEK 10 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you discuss, apply, and respond to what you saw in Scripture this week, but feel free to also utilize any of the questions from the daily studies.

1. Who is a person that you think left a great legacy for those around them, whether it's someone from history, a family member, or a friend or mentor you esteem? What was their legacy?

2. What are a couple of things you'd like to be part of your legacy? What are things you might need to do, change, or invest yourself into so that you leave a spiritual legacy that outlasts you?

3. First Chronicles 21-29 records David's plans and work forward to make sure Solomon would build the temple. Why do you think David was so passionate about God having a glorious temple among His people in Jerusalem? (See 2 Samuel 7:1-3; 1 Chronicles 22:7; 29:1; Psalm 132:1-5.)

4. Why is it fitting that David's story and words—and even this study—conclude with knowing and praising God? How can you better live your life with these aims?

5. Why did David rejoice in 1 Chronicles 29:9? What do you notice about what David prayed in his final prayer (1 Chronicles 29:10-20)?

6. Near his death, David prayed that God would give Solomon a "whole heart" to seek and obey God (1 Chronicles 29:19). What would you pray for those closest to you if you had one more chance to pray over them?

7. What encourages you or challenges you from this final part of David's story?

8. Having studied the life and words of David in greater detail, what are a couple of things you learned from his story and psalms, or what are a couple of lessons you've learned that can help you in your own walk with God?

9. How does David's story reveal the faithfulness, goodness, steadfast love, and power of God? What are attributes of God you think David's story reveals?