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## David Hears of Saul's Death - 2 Samuel 1:1-16

Topics: Appearance, Assumptions, Choices, Citizenship, Consequences, Death, Emotions, Fasting, Fear, Flattery, Grief, Guilt, Honor, Motives, Mourning, Murder, Possessions, Punishment, Zeal

### Open It

1. What is the purpose of symbols of office for those in government leadership?
2. How do people react whenever a winning team gloats over a victory?
- \* 3. How would you feel if someone who hated you suddenly died?

### Explore It

4. Where had David been while Saul was engaged in his last battle? (1:1)
5. When did David learn about Saul's death? (1:2)
6. What was the appearance and attitude of the messenger who came to David? (1:2)
- \* 7. What news did the messenger bring to David? (1:3-4)
8. What question remained in David's mind even though the messenger said that Saul was dead? (1:5)
- \* 9. According to the messenger, what was his own role in Saul's demise? (1:5-10)
10. What did the messenger take from Saul's body with the express purpose of bringing it to David? (1:10)
- \* 11. How did David and his men react to the messenger's story? (1:11-12)
12. How long did David wait before dealing with the messenger? (1:12-15)
13. Who was the messenger? (1:13)
14. What did David hold against the Amalekite messenger? (1:14)
15. What sentence did David impose on the Amalekite messenger? (1:15)
16. What was David's reason for executing the messenger? (1:16)

### Get It

17. Why should the messenger have been afraid to destroy Saul even though Saul was mortally wounded and asked to be killed?
- \* 18. What reaction did the messenger expect when he came to David with the news of Saul's death?
19. How do you think David would have reacted to Saul's wish to be put out of his misery had he been on Mount Gilboa?
- \* 20. What's wrong with taking justice into our own hands even when the offender clearly deserves punishment?
21. Why is it important to mourn someone's death?

### Apply It

- \* 22. How could you show reverence for the God-given life of someone who hates you?
23. In what way can you show that you refuse to take death lightly, even if you hear a lot about it on a day-to-day basis?

## David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan - 2 Samuel 1:17-27

Topics: Achievements, Armor, Death,  
Enemies, Friendship, Glory, Grief, Heroes,  
Love, Mourning, War, Zeal

### Open It

- \* 1. At what times in your life is a favorite sad song especially meaningful to you?
- 2. What do the living gain by reminding themselves of the exploits and accomplishments of those who have gone before?
- 3. How do you remember events in the past that are important to you?

### Explore It

- 4. Who composed the lament for Saul and Jonathan? (1:17)
- \* 5. What order did David give regarding the lament for Saul and Jonathan? (1:18)
- 6. What words of high praise did David use to describe Saul and Jonathan? (1:19)
- 7. What was the refrain that started and ended David's lament? (1:19, 27)
- 8. Why did David not want the news of Saul's and Jonathan's death proclaimed in Gath and Ashkelon? (1:20)
- 9. What unfortunate association would David have with the mountains of Gilboa from this time forward? (1:21)
- \* 10. What figures of speech did David use to describe Saul's and Jonathan's valor in battle? (1:22)
- \* 11. How did David extol the relationship between Saul and Jonathan? (1:23)
- 12. Why did David say that the daughters of Israel should weep for Saul? (1:24)
- 13. How did David express his personal grief over Jonathan? (1:26)

### Get It

- 14. What made David particularly qualified to write the lament for Saul and Jonathan?
- 15. Why would David want this song to be taught to all the men of Judah?
- \* 16. What advantage was there in David's memorializing only Saul's good qualities?
- 17. How is it valuable to remember the good deeds of those who have gone before us?
- 18. Why did David not seem to begrudge the fact that his friend Jonathan stayed loyal to his father?
- 19. What example does David set for us by recording this lament?
- \* 20. What is the value of remembering the past with all of its joy and sorrow?

### Apply It

- \* 21. What sort of lament (sad lyric) could you create that would help you preserve the memory of a loved one?
- 22. What story of a faithful and valiant saint could you share with your friends or children this week?

## David Anointed King over Judah - 2 Samuel 2:1-7

Topics: Affirmation, Authority, Blessing, Courage, Enemies, Guidance, Honor, Invitation, Kindness, Loyalty, Moving, Respect, Rewards, Sovereignty

### Open It

1. What would it feel like to be widely identified as a loyal supporter of a defeated candidate?
2. When can you recall receiving thanks from a most unexpected source?
- \* 3. What are some of your formal and informal roles of leadership?

### Explore It

4. What two specific questions did David ask of the Lord following Saul's death? (2:1)
5. Where did God direct David to go in Judah? (2:1)
6. Who accompanied David back into Judah after his self-imposed exile? (2:2-3)
7. When they learned that David was living in Hebron, what did the men of Judah do? (2:4)
- \* 8. What message did David send to the men of Jabesh Gilead? (2:5)
9. For what blessing did David ask God to grant Jabesh Gilead? (2:6)
- \* 10. What promise did David make to Jabesh Gilead? (2:6)
11. What did David exhort the men of Jabesh Gilead to do in the face of their loss? (2:7)
- \* 12. What piece of news did David want the men of Jabesh Gilead to hear from him directly? (2:7)

### Get It

13. Why did David stop to ask God's direction when he knew that his rival for the kingship was dead?
14. What was appealing about the decision of David and his men to settle their families in Judah rather than acting like a conquering army?
15. Why would David prefer to have the people of Judah anoint him king rather than declaring himself king based on Samuel's anointing?
16. What reaction might the people of Jabesh Gilead have expected from David because they salvaged the honor of Saul after his death?
- \* 17. Why was it wise for David to acknowledge the bravery of the men of Jabesh Gilead and solicit their loyalty?
- \* 18. How should a godly leader step into leadership and strengthen his or her position?
19. Even when the answer seems obvious, why should we seek God's guidance?

### Apply It

- \* 20. In the leadership roles in your life (family, business, church), how can you acknowledge the positive qualities and contributions of your predecessors?
21. In what matter do you need to seek God's guidance today?
22. How can you make yourself available to be drafted rather than announcing yourself the next time there is an opening in leadership?

## War between the Houses of David and Saul - 2 Samuel 2:8-3:5

Topics: Ambition, Bitterness, Challenge, Conscience, Consequences, Death, Decisions, Determination, Divisions, Enemies, Giving Up, Government, Humiliation, Impulsiveness, Leadership, Loyalty, Mediator, Persistence, Revenge, Stubbornness, War

### Open It

- \* 1. Why is a civil war often the most fierce and brutal kind of war?
- 2. What are some examples of sibling rivalry?
- 3. What are some examples of the recklessness of youth or the restraint of age?

### Explore It

- 4. Who was the leader who rallied Israel behind Saul's remaining son instead of accepting David as king? (2:8)
- 5. How long did David remain in Hebron as king of Judah? (2:11)
- 6. Where did the armies of Israel and Judah meet one another? (2:12-13)
- 7. Who was the commander of David's forces? (2:13)
- 8. How did Abner propose to deal with the rivalry between the kings? (2:14)
- 9. What was the outcome of the duel between the representative young men? (2:16)
- 10. What transpired after the duel had played itself out in tragedy? (2:17)
- 11. Which side prevailed in the fighting between the armies of Saul's son Ish-Bosheth and David? (2:17)
- 12. Who were the three sons of Zeruah who followed David? (2:18)
- 13. What unique ability belonged to Asahel? (2:18)
- 14. What rash action did Asahel take in battle? (2:19)
- 15. What did Abner try to get Asahel to do once he realized Asahel was chasing him? (2:20-21)
- 16. Why was Abner loathe to strike down Asahel? (2:22)
- 17. What finally occurred when Abner turned to confront Asahel? (2:23)
- 18. What was the reaction of the troops of Judah when they discovered Asahel? (2:23)
- 19. Where did Abner and his fleeing troops take a stand and gather reinforcements? (2:24-25)
- \* 20. On what basis did Abner appeal to Joab? (2:26)
- \* 21. Why did Joab decide to call off his pursuit of Abner and his men? (2:27-28)
- 22. What were the losses on each side of the battle? (2:30-31)
- 23. What became of the body of the fallen Asahel? (2:32)
- \* 24. What gradually happened in the war between the rival kings David and Ish-Bosheth? (3:1)

### Get It

- 25. How do you think God felt about Abner mustering resistance against David?
- 26. Why were the two sides, Israel and Judah, initially hesitant to engage in full-scale battle?
- 27. What was good or bad about the idea of allowing twelve young men to fight on behalf

## Abner Goes Over to David - 2 Samuel 3:6-21

*Topics:* Accusation, Ambition, Change, Enemies, Family, Fear, Fellowship, Government, Husbands, Influence, Insults, Intimidation, Leadership, Loyalty, Marriage, Partnerships, Promises, Rebellion, Reconciliation, Relationships, Remarriage, Reputation, Resentment, Sovereignty, Status, Teamwork, Unfaithfulness, War, Wives

### Open It

1. What is your definition of a good politician?
- \* 2. What would someone have to do in order to lose your loyalty?

### Explore It

3. What had Abner been doing during the war between David and Ish-Bosheth? (3:6)
4. What accusation did Ish-Bosheth make against Abner? (3:7)
5. How did Abner react to the accusation of Saul's son? (3:8)
6. Why was Ish-Bosheth intimidated by Abner's response? (3:9-11)
7. What message did Abner send to David? (3:12)
8. What condition did David want fulfilled before he would make an agreement with Abner? (3:13)
9. How was Michal (David's wife) reunited with him after Saul's death? (3:14-16)
- \* 10. What did Abner urge the elders of Israel to do? (3:17-18)
11. How did Abner persuade the Benjamites to join him? (3:19)
- \* 12. What news did Abner bring to David at Hebron? (3:19)
13. How did David receive Abner's delegation? (3:20)
- \* 14. What did Abner intend to do after he left David? (3:21)

### Get It

15. What special skills did Abner, Saul's general, possess?
16. Why was David's request to have his wife Michal restored to him granted by Ish-Bosheth and Abner?
- \* 17. What was the most persuasive argument for the people of Israel to declare David their king?
- \* 18. What is unwise about setting yourself in opposition to the revealed will of God?
19. Why is hospitality such a powerful bridge-builder between people?
20. What is needed to convince a group of people to reverse their course of action?
21. In what areas of life might you be engaged in a futile resistance of something you know God has ordained?

### Apply It

22. How could you use hospitality to communicate esteem for someone this week?
- \* 23. In what way can you show deference to God's will in an area of life that needs it?

## Joab Murders Abner - 2 Samuel 3:22-39

*Topics:* Accountability, Advice, Authority, Commitment, Conscience, Death, Deceit, Emotions, Evil, Family, Heroes, Intentions, Judgment, Mourning, Murder, Popularity, Revenge, Sincerity, Sovereignty, Stubbornness, Vows

### Open It

- \* 1. How do you go about judging the sincerity of another person?
- 2. What seems appealing about the idea of getting revenge?

### Explore It

- 3. Where was Joab while David was meeting with Abner? (3:22)
- 4. What did Joab learn when he returned to David's camp at Hebron? (3:23)
- 5. What did Joab think of David's decision to negotiate a truce with Abner? (3:24-25)
- 6. How did Joab choose to interpret Abner's desire to meet with David? (3:25)
- 7. What action did Joab take without David's knowledge? (3:26)
- 8. How did Joab set up an opportunity to murder Abner? (3:27)
- 9. Why did Joab murder Abner? (3:27)
- \* 10. How did David react to the news of Abner's death? (3:28)
- 11. What judgment did David pronounce on Joab for his violent act? (3:29)
- 12. What did David force Joab and his men to do? (3:31)
- 13. What feelings did David evidence when Abner was buried? (3:32)
- 14. What attitude did David convey toward Abner's death in the lament he composed? (3:33-34)
- \* 15. How did the people of Judah who followed David react to Abner's death? (3:34)
- 16. What vow did David make out of respect for Abner? (3:35)
- \* 17. Why did most of the people approve of David's reaction to Abner's death? (3:36-37)
- 18. How did David eulogize Abner? (3:38)
- 19. What was David's attitude toward Joab and Abishai? (3:39)

### Get It

- 20. Why was Joab disappointed that Abner was already gone by the time he returned to Hebron?
- 21. Why was it to Joab's advantage to have the king mistrust Abner?
- \* 22. Why were the people watching to see if David's grief over Abner was sincere?
- 23. What did David mean when he said, "these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me"?
- 24. Why didn't David punish Joab and Abishai for the murder of Abner?
- 25. Why isn't a leader always able to bring off diplomacy according to his own vision?
- 26. In what situations is it important to demonstrate sincerity before speaking?
- \* 27. What behaviors on your part could convince others of your sincerity better than words?
- 28. To whom do you need to prove your sincerity?

### Apply It

- \* 29. What can you do this week to prove your sincerity to someone who needs to be convinced?
- 30. What current grievance against another person would you do well to leave to God's judgment?



## Ish-Bosheth Murdered - 2 Samuel 4:1-5:5

*Topics:* Ambition, Anger, Assumptions, Children, Comparisons, Consequences, Covenant, Death, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Family, Flattery, Foolishness, Guilt, Ignorance, Injustice, Justice, Motives, Mourning, Murder, Power, Punishment, Representatives, Sovereignty

### Open It

- \* 1. What are some of the ways that people try to gain favor and influence with powerful people?
- 2. What can we learn from the mistakes of others?
- 3. What is one thing you have learned from someone else's mistake?

### Explore It

- 4. How did Israel and its leader react to the news that Abner was dead? (4:1)
- 5. Who were the two leaders of Israel's raiding bands? (4:2-3)
- 6. How was Jonathan's son rescued after Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle? (4:4)
- 7. How did Mephibosheth become crippled? (4:4)
- 8. How did Recab and Baanah manage to murder Ish-Bosheth without being detected? (4:5-6)
- \* 9. What did Recab and Baanah expect when they went directly to David with the head of Saul's son? (4:7-8)
- \* 10. What similar incident did David recount for Recab and Baanah? (4:9-10)
- 11. How was this incident amazingly like the one that transpired after Saul's death? (4:10)
- \* 12. Why were the leaders of Israel's raiding bands even more guilty than the man who reported Saul's death to David? (4:11)
- 13. How did David go about making an example of the men who had planned to please him? (4:12)
- 14. How did David treat Ish-Bosheth after his death? (4:12)
- 15. Of what common history did the leaders of Israel remind David when they came to make him king? (5:1-2)
- 16. What significant event took place at Hebron after years of fighting between Israel and Judah? (5:3)
- 17. How long was David king over both Israel and Judah? (5:5)

### Get It

- 18. Why did the death of Abner cause alarm in Israel?
- \* 19. Why did the two leaders assume that David would want Ish-Bosheth dead?
- \* 20. Why was David able to resist and condemn violence against his own enemies?
- 21. In what sense was Ish-Bosheth innocent?
- 22. Why is it dangerous to make assumptions about what will please those in authority?
- 23. Why is it better to be asked to assume leadership as opposed to establishing yourself by force?
- 24. What two reasons made it logical for Israel to make David their king?

### Apply It

- \* 25. In what way can you resist defending yourself and let God deliver you?
- 26. In what practical way can you honor someone you were close to who is now dead?

## David Conquers Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 5:6-25

**Topics:** Abandon, Accomplishments, Achievements, Answers, Assurance, Blessing, Blindness, Challenge, Children, Confidence, Craftsmanship, Decisions, Effectiveness, Evidence, Foolishness, Gifts, Guidance, Government, Insults, Leadership, Opposition, Popularity, Power, Priorities, Security, Sovereignty, Status, Strength, Success, Victory, Weaknesses, Wives

### Open It

1. Do you consider yourself mainly a “leader” or a “follower”? Why?
- \* 2. What burdens and rewards go along with leadership?

### Explore It

3. What city did David set out to conquer once he had been anointed king of Israel and Judah? (5:6)
4. What taunt did the Jebusites throw at David’s army? (5:6)
5. What was the outcome of David’s siege of Jerusalem? (5:7)
6. How did David turn the taunt of the Jebusites against them? (5:8)
7. What did David do in Jerusalem after he conquered it? (5:9)
- \* 8. Why did David continue to prosper and grow more powerful? (5:10)
- \* 9. What honor did David receive from a foreign king? (5:11)
- \* 10. How did David interpret the honors he was receiving? (5:12)
11. What children were born to David after he had settled in Jerusalem? (5:14-16)
12. How did the Philistines respond to David’s expanded kingship? (5:17)
13. What did David seek before he engaged the Philistines in battle? (5:18-19)
14. What was the significance of the name given to the place where David defeated the Philistines? (5:20)
15. How did David behave when the Philistines gathered against him for a second time? (5:22-23)
16. What was different about the Lord’s response to David’s second inquiry? (5:23-24)
17. What was the outcome of the second battle? (5:25)

### Get It

18. Why did David need to establish a new capital city after becoming king of both Judah and Israel?
- \* 19. In what different ways could David have responded to an honor such as gifts sent from a foreign king?
20. What was David’s first instinct when he heard about the Philistines amassing against him?
21. How did the naming of the place of David’s first victory against the Philistines give glory to God rather than to himself?
22. Why was it a good thing that David did not assume that the second battle would go exactly like the first?
- \* 23. What are the potential pitfalls of success in the life of the believer?
24. What lessons should we draw from our successes and the congratulations of others?
25. When is God more concerned with our attitudes than our outcomes?

### Apply It

- \* 26. What could serve as a concrete reminder that your successes are an indication of God’s grace?
27. How can you develop the habit of asking for God’s help instead of taking it for granted?

## The Ark Brought to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 6:1-23

**Topics:** Accountability, Accusation, Anger, Awe, Blessing, Celebration, Consequences, Criticism, Death, Delay, Dignity, Disagreements, Discouragement, Ego, Embarrassment, Enthusiasm, Fear, Heart, Husbands, Pride, Relationships, Responsibility, Wives

### Open It

- \* 1. What was the most elaborate public celebration you've ever attended?
- 2. What Christian worship practices or styles of worship embarrass you or make you uncomfortable?

### Explore It

- 3. What was the mission on which David and his men went to Baalah of Judah? (6:2)
- 4. How was the ark being transported from the house of Abinadab? (6:3-5)
- 5. What prompted Uzzah to reach out and hold onto the ark? (6:6)
- 6. How did God judge Uzzah's action of reaching out for the ark? (6:7)
- 7. What was David's emotional reaction to the death of Uzzah? (6:8)
- 8. After the death of the priest, what change of plans did David make out of fear? (6:9-10)
- 9. What persuaded David to go back for the ark after three months? (6:12)
- 10. How was the public procession handled differently the second time? (6:13)
- \* 11. What was the mood of David and the people as they transported the ark? (6:14-15)
- \* 12. How did Michal react when she saw David dancing before the Lord? (6:16)
- 13. How did David culminate the celebration when the ark reached Jerusalem? (6:17-19)
- 14. What was Michal's response to David when he returned home after the celebration? (6:20)
- \* 15. What was David's attitude about the way in which he had worshiped God? (6:21-22)
- 16. What became of Michal after this incident in which she "despised" David? (6:23)

### Get It

- 17. Why was Uzzah's action irreverent even though he was trying to protect the ark?
- 18. If you had been present on the day of Uzzah's death, how would you have felt about having the ark brought to your home?
- 19. What was God's response to David's anger and fear?
- \* 20. Why was Michal so upset by David's behavior in the procession?
- 21. In what ways can we become subtly irreverent in our behavior before God?
- \* 22. How can we combine proper reverence before God with unparalleled joy and celebration?

### Apply It

- \* 23. How can you express your wholehearted joy before the Lord this week?
- 24. What is an appropriate response for someone who finds your worship practices "undignified"?

## God's Promise to David - 2 Samuel 7:1-17

**Topics:** Blessing, Correction, Covenant, Discipline, Enemies, Family, Future, Goals, God's Will, Greatness, Heritage, Honor, Jesus Christ, Love, Name, Oppressed, Peace, Plans, Punishment, Rejection, Security, Sovereignty

### Open It

- \* 1. In what way do you think church buildings should reflect our humility? our esteem for God?
- 2. In what sense can prosperity be both comfortable and uncomfortable?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What contrast bothered David after he was well established in Jerusalem? (7:1-2)
- 4. What was Nathan's initial reaction to David's instinct to build a house for the ark of God? (7:3)
- \* 5. According to the word Nathan received from the Lord, how did God feel about the fact that no permanent house of worship had been built? (7:5-7)
- 6. What did God remind David about how he had achieved his current prosperity? (7:8-9)
- 7. What promise did God make concerning His people, Israel? (7:10-11)
- 8. What was God's covenant with the house of David? (7:11-12, 16)
- \* 9. What was God's will concerning the building of a house for His Name? (7:13)
- 10. How long did God promise to establish the throne of David? (7:13)
- 11. What relationship did God promise to have with David's son and his descendants? (7:14)
- 12. How did God promise to treat David differently than He had treated Saul? (7:15)
- 13. What did Nathan do after God had revealed these things to him in the night? (7:17)

### Get It

- \* 14. Initially, did David's concern for the house of God sound pious or presumptuous?
- 15. Why is it significant that Nathan heard from God immediately after he had spoken with David?
- 16. What gentle correction did God include with His promises to David?
- 17. What was God's intention in making David powerful and prosperous?
- \* 18. How should we determine the appropriate setting and methods for worshiping God?
- 19. What statement sums up the worst that happened to King Saul?
- 20. What is the most reassuring aspect of God's covenant with the house of David?
- 21. How is God's punishment consistent with His unfailing love?

### Apply It

- 22. How might God be intending to bless others through His blessings to you personally?
- \* 23. What is the most important "temple" you can offer to God, and what is one thing you can do to offer it?

## David's Prayer - 2 Samuel 7:18-29

**Topics:** Abundance, Awe, Blessing, Courage, Covenant, Future, God's Will, Humility, People, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Thankfulness, Trust

### Open It

- \* 1. What is the first thing you want to do when you receive very good news?
- 2. What's your favorite example of a pleasant surprise?
- 3. How much do your ancestors and your descendants figure into your day-to-day life?

### Explore It

- 4. After David heard Nathan's word from God, what did he do? (7:18)
- \* 5. What was David's attitude toward the blessings he was currently enjoying? (7:18)
- \* 6. What was even more amazing to David than his current prosperity? (7:19)
- \* 7. Why did David find himself almost speechless before God? (7:20-21)
- 8. What attributes of God did David begin to praise? (7:22)
- 9. What did David proclaim to be unique about Israel? (7:23)
- 10. Who was the initiator in the relationship between God and Israel? (7:24)
- 11. What request did David make of God in the midst of his praises? (7:25)
- 12. What testimony did David envision coming out of the blessing of his family? (7:26)
- 13. According to David, where did he find the courage to pray to God? (7:27)
- 14. How did David demonstrate his confidence in God and His word? (7:28-29)
- 15. What did David ask of God at the end of his prayer? (7:29)

### Get It

- \* 16. How did David demonstrate that he understood the uniqueness of God's covenant with him?
- 17. Why was David in shock?
- 18. Why is it important to thank God for the good things we enjoy?
- 19. What are the benefits of praising God?
- 20. In what way had God used Israel to "make a name for himself"?
- 21. What was unusual about the request David made of God?
- 22. Why is it appropriate to ask God for things He has already promised?
- \* 23. In what sense does it take courage to approach God in prayer?

### Apply It

- 24. In what area of life could you benefit by praying that God will do as He has promised?
- \* 25. In the coming week, how can you cultivate a sense of awe at God's goodness?
- 26. For what great gift or blessing do you want to thank God now?

## David's Victories - 2 Samuel 8:1-18

**Topics:** Administration, Achievements, Advice, Authority, Death, Dedication, Enemies, Government, Help, Justice, Lifestyle, Possessions, Power, Reputation, Righteousness, Submission, Victory, Wealth

### Open It

- \* 1. Why do successful people tend to forget about those who helped them reach success?
- 2. What are some instances of governmental success or failure with regard to issues of justice?

### Explore It

- 3. How did David fare in his battles with Israel's traditional enemies, the Philistines? (8:1)
- 4. How did David ensure the fear and subjection of the Moabites? (8:2)
- 5. From what king did David capture soldiers, horses, and chariots? (8:3-4)
- \* 6. What unusual step did David take when he captured a thousand chariot horses? (8:4)
- 7. What was the result of David's encounter with the Arameans? (8:5-6)
- \* 8. What valuable plunder did David take from Hadadezer? (8:7-8)
- 9. From what king did David receive gifts because of his victory over a common enemy? (8:9-10)
- \* 10. What did David do with the valuable articles and precious metals he captured in his campaigns? (8:11-12)
- 11. What spectacular victory spread David's fame even farther than it already had? (8:13)
- 12. How did David reinforce his sovereignty in Edom? (8:14)
- 13. What qualities characterized David's reign over the united Israel? (8:15)

### Get It

- \* 14. Which of David's activities as a conquering ruler were unusual or unexpected?
- 15. What strategies assured David of expanded territory and continual income?
- 16. Why was David so successful?
- 17. Why did David dedicate the most valuable plunder he got through warfare?
- 18. What incentive is there for powerful rulers to be just?
- \* 19. What dangers are inherent in sudden, overwhelming success?
- 20. What are some of the ways that one powerful ruler can acknowledge another?

### Apply It

- \* 21. What could you do to dedicate the fruits of your successes to the Lord?
- 22. In your positions of leadership (whether formal or informal), what can you do to ensure that you are just and right toward the people God has entrusted to you?

## David and Mephibosheth - 2 Samuel 9:1-13

*Topics:* Family, Gifts, Grace, Handicapped, Honor, Humility, Kindness, Remembering, Restoration, Serving

### Open It

- \* 1. If you had it within your power, whom would you elevate from “rags to riches” and why?
- 2. What activities of daily life are a continual challenge for people with disabilities?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What commitment did David remember when he was established in the kingship of Israel? (9:1)
- 4. From whom did David seek information about Saul’s survivors? (9:2)
- 5. Which relative of Saul did David learn about from the servant Ziba? (9:3)
- 6. Where did David find Jonathan’s son living? (9:4-5)
- 7. What attitude did Mephibosheth assume toward David when they met? (9:6)
- \* 8. What promises did David make to Mephibosheth? (9:7)
- 9. How did Mephibosheth expect to be treated by David? (9:8)
- 10. What commands did David give to Ziba concerning Mephibosheth? (9:9-10)
- \* 11. What kind of treatment did Mephibosheth receive in David’s house? (9:11)
- 12. How would another generation of Saul’s family continue in Israel? (9:12)
- 13. Why did Mephibosheth live in Jerusalem from this time onward although his family’s lands were elsewhere? (9:13)

### Get It

- 14. Why was it especially important to David to find the surviving members of Saul’s family?
- 15. Why did Mephibosheth have reason to be afraid of David?
- 16. What special provision did David make because of Mephibosheth’s disability?
- 17. Why is it important to carry through on promises made, even if the person to whom you made them is dead and gone?
- \* 18. Why is it a bad idea to hold a grudge against the heirs or associates of a person who has persecuted you?
- \* 19. Why is it a greater honor to ask someone to eat with you than simply to give him or her a meal?

### Apply It

- 20. What promise from the past can you take steps to fulfill today?
- \* 21. What concrete way can you find to honor a friend or relative who is deceased?
- 22. The next time you encounter someone who has a disability, how can you be sure to respect his or her dignity?

## David Defeats the Ammonites - 2 Samuel 10:1-19

*Topics:* Ambassadors, Anger, Consequences, Courage, Deceit, Delegation, Doubt, Enemies, Friendship, Help, Honor, Humiliation, Instructions, Insults, Intimidation, Kindness, Motives, Mourning, Neighbor, Opposition, Partnerships, Peace, Plans, Representatives, Revenge, Submission, Trust, Victory, War

### Open It

- \* 1. What sincere gesture on your part has been grossly misinterpreted?
- 2. What are the differences between a war on your own soil and war on behalf of another nation?

### Explore It

- \* 3. Why did David send a delegation to Hanun, king of the Ammonites? (10:1-2)
- \* 4. What suspicion was planted in Hanun's mind by his nobles? (10:3)
- \* 5. What did Hanun do to the men David had sent to him? (10:4)
  - 6. How did David seek to comfort his humiliated representatives? (10:5)
  - 7. What did the Ammonites do when they realized they had made an enemy of David? (10:6)
  - 8. What was David's response to the mobilization of Ammonite and mercenary troops? (10:7)
  - 9. What was the military situation confronting Joab? (10:8-9)
  - 10. How did Joab choose to deal with the situation of being surrounded by hostile troops? (10:9-10)
  - 11. What agreement did Joab make with Abishai concerning the battle? (10:11)
  - 12. Why was Joab not panicked by the way the battle was shaping up? (10:12)
  - 13. What was the outcome of the battle on the two fronts? (10:13-14)
  - 14. What did the Arameans do after they were initially turned back by Joab? (10:15-16)
  - 15. How did David respond to the regrouping of the Arameans? (10:17)
  - 16. What was the extent of David's victory over the Arameans? (10:18-19)

### Get It

- \* 17. What kind of advice did Hanun get from his noblemen?
  - 18. How widespread was the damage from one error of judgment in this situation?
- \* 19. Why should a slight or insult of another person not be undertaken lightly?
  - 20. What are the advantages of a flexible "battle plan"?
  - 21. What is most likely to make allies part ways?
  - 22. How can knowledge of God's character make us more courageous in the challenges we face?

### Apply It

- 23. What is one thing you can do to increase your knowledge of God's character?
- \* 24. How can you become a better judge of character and intentions?



## David and Bathsheba - 2 Samuel 11:1-27

**Topics:** Abandon, Adultery, Anger, Authority, Children, Danger, Death, Deceit, Dedication, Devotion, Dishonesty, Drinking, Encouragement, Guilt, Home, Honor, Hospitality, Husbands, Immorality, Instructions, Integrity, Involvement, Isolation, Loyalty, Lust, Marriage, Morality, Motives, Mourning, Murder, Neighbor, Plans, Power, Remarriage, Selfishness, Sex, Sin, Temptation, War, Wives

### Open It

- \* 1. In what ways do you agree or disagree with the adage “Power corrupts”?
- 2. Whom have you ever known who seemed so loyal and honest as to be “too good to be true”?

### Explore It

- 3. Where was David while the Israelite army was engaged in battle against the Ammonites? (11:1)
- 4. What did David observe one night from the roof of the palace? (11:2)
- \* 5. How did David misuse his authority as king in relation to the woman he observed? (11:3-5)
- 6. After David found out Bathsheba was pregnant, what did he do next? (11:6)
- 7. What was David’s pretext for sending for Uriah from the battlefield? (11:7)
- 8. Where did David send Uriah after he spoke with him? (11:8)
- 9. Why didn’t Uriah take David up on the invitation to go to his own home? (11:9-11)
- \* 10. What ploy did David try to get Uriah to go home to his wife? (11:13)
- 11. When Uriah did not go home, what message did David send back with him to Joab? (11:14-15)
- 12. What steps did Joab take to fulfill the king’s wishes? (11:16-17)
- 13. What special instructions did Joab give to the messenger in case David grew angry at the losses taken by the Israelites? (11:18-21)
- \* 14. How did David receive the news of the battle when he realized that his purposes had been accomplished with regard to Uriah? (11:25)
- 15. How did Bathsheba react to the death of Uriah the Hittite? (11:26)
- 16. How did David treat Bathsheba once her husband was out of the way? (11:27)
- 17. How did God feel about what David had done? (11:27)

### Get It

- \* 18. Why did David try everything within his power to get Uriah to sleep with his wife while he was home from the wars?
- 19. How did one sin lead to another and another in David’s case?
- 20. What was the immediate human cost of David’s lust and selfishness?
- 21. Why do you suppose Joab put a whole group of men in peril instead of following David’s suggestion about abandoning Uriah?
- 22. If he had been thinking like a responsible leader, how should David have reacted to the losses Joab reported from the battle?
- 23. Why does one sin often lead to other sins?
- \* 24. How does a position of authority exaggerate the human tendency to take what we want?

### Apply It

- 25. How can you break the cycle the next time you find yourself committing one sin to cover up another?
- \* 26. What can you do to maintain respect for people in the way you use power and authority?
- 27. In what area of your life would you like to develop an unwavering loyalty like Uriah’s?

## Nathan Rebukes David - 2 Samuel 12:1-31

**Topics:** Accountability, Adultery, Anger, Atonement, Children, Death, Evil, Fasting, Grief, Injustice, Judgment, Murder, Parents, Persistence, Poor, Prayer, Prophecy, Repentance, Selfishness, Sickness, Sin, Victory, Waiting, Worship

### Open It

1. When was a time you were eventually thankful that someone didn't grant a request of yours?
- \* 2. To what extent do you believe public officials should be accountable for their private behavior?

### Explore It

3. In Nathan's story what was special about the ewe lamb belonging to the poor man? (12:1-3)
4. What injustice was perpetrated by the rich man against the poor man in Nathan's story? (12:4)
5. How did David react to Nathan's story? (12:5-6)
- \* 6. How did Nathan use the story to convict David? (12:7-9)
7. What judgment did God pronounce on David through Nathan? (12:10)
8. How did God say He would bring David's secret sin into the open? (12:11-12)
9. What did David admit after Nathan had spoken? (12:13)
- \* 10. According to Nathan, what would be the consequences of David's sin? (12:13-14)
11. What happened in David's family after Nathan left the palace? (12:15)
12. What did David do in response to his son's illness? (12:16-17)
13. Why were the servants afraid to tell David that David's child had died? (12:18)
14. How did David find out that his son was dead? (12:19)
- \* 15. How did David act after he knew that God was not going to change His mind and allow the child to live? (12:20)
16. How did David explain his sudden change of demeanor to the puzzled servants? (12:21-23)
17. What was the name of the next child of David and Bathsheba? (12:24-25)
18. How was Joab and the army of Israel faring in the war? (12:26-27)
19. What message did Joab send from the front to his commander in chief? (12:28)
20. What was the outcome of David's battle against Rabbah? (12:29-31)

### Get It

21. Why was the parable Nathan told to David so effective?
- \* 22. In what sense did David "despise" God by taking Uriah's wife and having Uriah killed?
23. In what sense can a definite "no" from God in response to our request actually be a relief?
24. Why did God not strike David dead because of his sin?
- \* 25. How did David's fasting and prayer before the child died show the quality of his relationship with God?
26. What did David mean when he said, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me"?
27. How can "getting on with our lives" after a crisis be an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God?
28. Why is our sense of outrage easily sparked against strangers but difficult to muster in relation to our own actions?
29. Why does a good servant or employee let his or her superior take the credit for accomplishments he or she might have engineered?

### Apply It

30. How can you develop an ear for parables so that you will recognize your situation when it is appropriate to do so?
- \* 31. On what matter of concern can you plead for God's mercy while there is still a chance that God might grant it?

32. In what situation before you now should you step aside and let someone else have the glory?

## Amnon and Tamar - 2 Samuel 13:1-22

**Topics:** Alone, Anger, Arguments, Beauty, Deceit, Desires, Despair, Dishonesty, Evil, Foolishness, Friendship, Frustration, Grief, Guilt, Hatred, Honor, Hopelessness, Hospitality, Immorality, Instructions, Intentions, Love, Lust, Marriage, Mourning, Rejection, Self-Centeredness, Sex, Shame, Sickness, Sin, Strength

### Open It

1. In your mind what character, real or fictional, best personifies the evil instigator?
- \* 2. Why, when we finally get the thing we have wanted most, are we often less than satisfied?

### Explore It

3. Which of David's sons fell in love with one of David's daughters? (13:1)
4. Why was Amnon frustrated? (13:1-2)
5. What was the reputation of Jonadab? (13:3)
6. What plan did Jonadab propose for Amnon to get what he wanted? (13:4-5)
7. When Amnon feigned illness, what request did he make of King David? (13:6)
8. How did David respond to Amnon's request? (13:7)
9. What did Amnon do when Tamar had followed all of his instructions? (13:8-10)
- \* 10. What proposition did Amnon make to Tamar when they were alone? (13:11)
11. How did Tamar respond to Amnon's advances? (13:12)
- \* 12. What were Tamar's arguments to try to get Amnon to leave her alone? (13:12-13)
13. How did Amnon finally get what he wanted from Tamar? (13:14)
- \* 14. How did Amnon feel about Tamar after he had slept with her? (13:15)
15. Why didn't Tamar want Amnon to send her away? (13:16)
16. How did Amnon get rid of Tamar when he no longer wanted her? (13:17)
17. What did Tamar do when Amnon turned her out? (13:18-19)
18. What did Absalom guess had happened to his sister Tamar? (13:20)
19. What became of Tamar after she was raped by Amnon? (13:20)
20. What was David's reaction when he heard about the incident involving Amnon and Tamar? (13:21)
21. What did Absalom do with his anger toward Amnon? (13:22)

### Get It

22. How would you characterize the advice given to Amnon by his "friend" Jonadab?
23. In what way was Amnon's sin like the sin of his father David with Bathsheba?
24. On what did Tamar base her resistance to Amnon's advances?
25. What more could David have done with his anger at Amnon?
- \* 26. Why is obsession with a person or thing dangerous?
- \* 27. Why are lust and genuine love seldom related?
28. What should we do when we become angry—act immediately, store it up for a future occasion, or something else?

### Apply It

- \* 29. What overwhelming desire should you examine for its purity before you pursue it at all costs?
30. What steps can you take to evaluate objectively the character and motives of your "advisors"?

## Absalom Kills Amnon - 2 Samuel 13:23-39

*Topics:* Acceptance, Advice, Affections, Bitterness, Blessing, Death, Deceit, Drinking, Emotions, Escape, Family, Fear, Feelings, Grief, Instructions, Intentions, Invitation, Mourning, Murder, Plans, Questions, Revenge, Running, Sorrow

### Open It

- \* 1. What are the pitfalls of taking justice into your own hands?
- 2. What invitation have you received that turned out to have a hidden agenda behind it?

### Explore It

- \* 3. How long did Absalom harbor anger against Amnon? (13:23)
- 4. For what occasion did Absalom invite the king and all his officials? (13:24)
- 5. Although he would not agree to go himself, whom did David agree to send to Absalom's feast? (13:25-27)
- \* 6. What order did Absalom give to his men concerning his brother Amnon? (13:28)
- 7. How did David's other sons react when Amnon was murdered? (13:29)
- 8. What rumor reached David concerning what had happened at Absalom's feast? (13:30-31)
- 9. Who stepped in with "inside information" to clarify the rumor David had heard? (13:32-33)
- 10. What did Absalom do after the murder of Amnon? (13:34)
- 11. How did David learn that Jonadab's version of events was true? (13:34-35)
- \* 12. What was the mood among David and his sons and servants following the news of Amnon's murder? (13:36)
- 13. Where did Absalom go into self-imposed exile? (13:37)
- 14. How did David view what had transpired between his sons? (13:39)
- 15. What did David want to do more than anything once the incident was past? (13:39)

### Get It

- 16. What should have alerted David that Absalom's motives for holding the feast were less than pure?
- 17. Why did David's other sons flee from the banquet after Amnon's murder?
- 18. What might we surmise about Jonadab's involvement in the second part of the Amnon/Tamar incident?
- 19. What did it mean that David was "consoled concerning Amnon's death"?
- 20. Why do you suppose David was hesitant to speak to either Amnon concerning his sexual sin or Absalom when he contracted a murder?
- \* 21. Why is enmity and injury between close family members so painful for everyone involved?
- \* 22. What does it take to keep good relationships between family members?
- 23. Ultimately, why isn't it loving for a parent to withhold discipline from an unruly child?

### Apply It

- 24. What would be a constructive way to express anger you feel toward someone you love?
- \* 25. What interpersonal "disaster waiting to happen" could you deal with before greater harm is done?

## Absalom Returns to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 14:1-33

**Topics:** Appearance, Blessing, Change, Children, Complaining, Conflict, Death, Deceit, Determination, Evil, Family, Forgiveness, Grief, Guilt, Help, Heritage, Honor, Instructions, Life, Mourning, Name, Parents, People, Persistence, Restoration, Revenge, Separation, Words

### Open It

1. What is the most bizarre thing anyone has done to get your attention?
- \* 2. What sort of extenuating circumstances, if any, do you think should bar a person from having to bear the full punishment for a crime he or she has committed?

### Explore It

3. What did Joab know about the king's true desires? (14:1)
- \* 4. What elaborate ruse did Joab arrange to help David do what he wanted to do? (14:1-3)
5. What dilemma did the "widow" present to David? (14:4-7)
6. What promises did David make to the woman before he knew her real purpose? (14:8-11)
7. After David had promised to help the woman who came to him, what did she reveal about her real purpose for coming? (14:12-14)
8. What did the woman say "the people" felt about Absalom's exile? (14:15)
9. What question did David have for the woman when she had finished her plea? (14:18-19)
- \* 10. Whom did the woman admit had put her up to her encounter with the king? (14:19-20)
- \* 11. What did David tell Joab to do? (14:21-23)
12. What limitations were put on Absalom when he returned to Jerusalem? (14:23-24)
13. What were the unique aspects of Absalom's physical appearance? (14:25-26)
14. How long did Absalom live in Jerusalem again without seeing David? (14:28)
15. When Joab did not answer Absalom's request, what did Absalom do to get Joab's attention? (14:29-32)
16. What did Absalom demand that Joab ask of the king? (14:32)
17. On what terms were David and his son reunited? (14:33)

### Get It

18. Why did Joab devise such an elaborate plan rather than simply asking David to send for Absalom?
19. Why did David take the halfway measure of allowing Absalom to return but not to see him?
20. What did Absalom's insistence on his rights reveal about his character?
- \* 21. How far should a friend go in helping you fulfill your desires?
- \* 22. What is good or bad about overcoming your own barriers of principle?

### Apply It

- \* 23. With what close friend could you share your spiritual goals so that he or she is not placed in the position of helping you compromise?
24. What judge or official do you know of who needs prayer in order to make wise judgments?

## Absalom's Conspiracy - 2 Samuel 15:1-12

**Topics:** Affections, Complaining, Criticism, Ego, Equality, Flattery, Government, Habits, Heart, Influence, Justice, Loyalty, Popularity, Promises, Rebellion, Relationships, Reputation, Self-Centeredness, Unfaithfulness, Vows

### Open It

- \* 1. What are some ways that ambitious individuals can “buy” a following?
- 2. What are the characteristics of the ambitious people you know?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What symbols of status and power did Absalom acquire? (15:1)
- 4. Whom was Absalom in the habit of intercepting at the city gate? (15:2)
- \* 5. How did Absalom flatter the people he met at the gate? (15:3)
- 6. With what “if only” statement did Absalom plant the idea of himself as leader? (15:4)
- 7. How did Absalom treat anyone who bowed down to him? (15:5)
- \* 8. How did the Israelites react to Absalom? (15:6)
- 9. What request did Absalom make of David when some years had passed? (15:7-9)
- 10. When he had gone to Hebron, what did Absalom ask his supporters to do? (15:10)
- 11. By what trick did Absalom give the appearance of having a large following? (15:11)
- 12. Whom else did Absalom find to join his rebellion? (15:12)

### Get It

- 13. Why was the city gate a particularly good place for Absalom to ingratiate himself with the Israelites?
- 14. How many of Absalom's interactions with people seem to you to have been sincere?
- \* 15. How do ambitious people manipulate the truth to their own advantage?
- 16. Why might it be wise to wonder about the motives of people who seem unusually helpful?
- 17. What circumstances make people susceptible to rebellion?
- \* 18. How is it possible to reconcile a strong personal ambition with devotion to God?

### Apply It

- \* 19. What ambition should you examine to see if it is submitted to the will of God?
- 20. What steps can you take to avoid being gullible to nay-sayers and influence-gatherers?

## David Flees - 2 Samuel 15:13-37

*Topics:* Abandon, Advice, Burdens, Decisions, Escape, Faithfulness, Family, Foolishness, Friendship, Giving Up, God's Will, Heart, Help, Instructions, Kindness, Loyalty, Mourning, Moving, Obedience, Plans, Prayer, Sacrifice, Sorrow, Teamwork, Vows, Waiting

### Open It

- \* 1. What would you be thinking and feeling if a sudden calamity forced you to leave your home?
- 2. To what person do you feel such loyalty that you would gladly endure danger along with him or her? Why?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What discouraging message came to David in Jerusalem? (15:13)
- \* 4. Why did David feel it was necessary to leave the city? (15:14)
- \* 5. How did the king's officials respond to David's orders? (15:15)
- 6. Who were some of the specific groups who left Jerusalem with David? (15:16-18)
- 7. Why did David offer to send one group back with his blessing? (15:19-20)
- 8. What was Ittai's response to David's urgings? (15:21)
- 9. What was the response of the people in the countryside when the king and his retinue passed by? (15:23)
- 10. What did the priests do with the holy articles when David left Jerusalem? (15:24)
- 11. Why did David send the ark of the covenant back into the city? (15:25-26)
- 12. What did David hope to accomplish by leaving the priests inside the city? (15:27-29)
- 13. What was the mood and appearance of David and the people with him at the Mount of Olives? (15:30)
- 14. What was David's prayer when he learned who was advising his son Absalom? (15:31)
- 15. Who met David at the summit of the Mount of Olives? (15:32)
- 16. What role did David assign to his friend Hushai in order to assist his cause? (15:33-37)

### Get It

- \* 17. Why was David so quick to leave Jerusalem without a fight?
- 18. What quality characterized David's close officials?
- 19. What actions of David showed that he was not ready to relinquish the kingship?
- 20. By letting events take their course, what was David waiting to find out from God?
- 21. What are the different roles that can be taken by helpful friends in time of calamity?
- \* 22. Why is an attitude of penitence and mourning appropriate when we are confronted with trials?
- 23. Why might it be a good idea to ask God to search your motives and vindicate you the next time you are confronted by setbacks or problems?

### Apply It

- 24. How can you make strategic requests of your loyal friends when you are in need?
- 25. To whom do you owe loyalty, even when he or she appears to be in trouble?
- \* 26. How can you entrust yourself to God the next time you face a setback?



## David, Ziba, and Shimei - 2 Samuel 16:1-14

**Topics:** Accusation, Ambition, Correction, Criticism, Discipline, Expectations, Gifts, God's Will, Hatred, Hope, Humiliation, Humility, Insults, Interpretation, Judging Others, Judgment, Justice, Opposition, Patience, Persecution, Perspective, Punishment, Rebellion, Revenge, Rewards, Serving, Swearing, Toleration, Wisdom, Words

### Open It

1. In what circumstances can it be difficult to tell your friends from your enemies?
2. As a child of God, who is likely to rejoice if you stumble?
- \* 3. How does it feel to be in a crowd that includes a heckler?

### Explore It

4. Who met David with provisions as he was fleeing Jerusalem? (16:1-2)
5. What difference of opinion did Ziba report between himself and Mephibosheth? (16:3)
6. What was David's response to Ziba's actions? (16:4)
- \* 7. What did Shimei son of Gera do when David's entourage passed his way? (16:5-6)
8. What accusation and curse did Shimei level against David? (16:7-8)
- \* 9. Why was Shimei so bitter against David? (16:8)
10. What did Abishai propose to do to Shimei? (16:9)
- \* 11. How did David's view of the situation differ radically from Abishai's? (16:10)
12. What order did David give concerning Shimei, and what was his reason for doing so? (16:11)
13. For what outcome did David hope instead of the immediate death of the heckler? (16:12)
14. What did Shimei continue to do as David and his men journeyed on? (16:13)
15. What did David do when he arrived at his destination? (16:14)

### Get It

16. Why is it not wise to take one person's version of events at face value without hearing the other side?
- \* 17. What character traits did David exhibit through his reaction to Shimei?
18. In what ways did David think Shimei's behavior was "understandable"?
- \* 19. What can a person learn from his or her critics?
20. In what ways is it appropriate to distance yourself from "enemies"?
21. Would you prefer to vindicate yourself or to be vindicated by God in due time? Why?
22. How does our belief in God enable us to respond charitably toward our enemies?

### Apply It

23. How do you need to distance yourself from people whose attitudes and methods conflict with your own?
- \* 24. To what critic in your life would you like to learn to respond with silence and faith in God?

## The Advice of Hushai and Ahithophel - 2 Samuel 16:15-17:29

**Topics:** Advice, Choices, Danger, Deceit, Escape, Friendship, Frustration, God's Will, Guidance, Hiding, Influence, Instructions, Lying, Plans, Rejection, Relationships, Reliability, Reputation, Respect, Teamwork, Wives

### Open It

- \* 1. What are the pros and cons of a head of state relying on advisors?
- 2. To whom do you turn for advice?
- 3. What makes your favorite "chase" scene from a book or movie so exciting?

### Explore It

- 4. Who was at Absalom's side when he entered Jerusalem? (16:15)
- 5. What question did Absalom have for Hushai the Arkite when they met? (16:16-17)
- 6. What reasons did Hushai give to convince Absalom that he would change his loyalties? (16:18-19)
- 7. What was Ahithophel's advice on how Absalom should proceed in his bid to become king instead of David? (16:20-22)
- 8. How was Ahithophel regarded as an advisor to kings? (16:23)
- \* 9. What plan of attack did Ahithophel recommend to Absalom? (17:1-4)
- \* 10. What was Hushai's reasoning to convince Absalom that Ahithophel's plan was not good? (17:5-10)
- 11. What alternate advice did Hushai give to Absalom? (17:11-13)
- 12. Which advisor's plan was more likely to bring success to Absalom? (17:14)
- \* 13. Why did Absalom choose to follow Hushai's advice? (17:14)
- 14. What message did Hushai send to David via the priests? (17:15-16)
- 15. Why did the priests' sons end up hiding from Absalom's men? (17:17-18)
- 16. Who assisted Ahimaaz and Jonathan in hiding from Absalom's men? (17:18-20)
- 17. What did David and his followers do in response to Hushai's message? (17:21-22)
- 18. How did Ahithophel take the news that his advice had not been followed? (17:23)
- 19. Who led the armies of Absalom to Gilead in pursuit of David? (17:24-26)
- 20. Who brought provisions to David at Mahanaim? (17:27-29)

### Get It

- 21. Why was Ahithophel such a valuable asset to Absalom?
- \* 22. In what sense was the struggle between Absalom and David more a struggle of wits than of armies?
- 23. What evidence do we have that intelligence and even wisdom can be used for either good or evil?
- \* 24. How can we filter the advice we receive to ensure that it is according to God's wisdom?
- 25. Why is teamwork often essential to achieving our objectives?
- 26. Why are outrageous and detestable actions used as a strategy of war?
- 27. How important is motivation and morale in the outcome of military fighting?

### Apply It

- \* 28. What safeguards should you employ before taking the advice of a widely acknowledged expert?
- 29. How can you make a contribution this week to the teamwork of the people of God?

## Absalom's Death - 2 Samuel 18:1-18

**Topics:** Affections, Anger, Arguments, Compassion, Criticism, Death, Decisions, Disagreements, Disobedience, Excuses, Initiative, Instructions, Love, Mercy, Murder, Opportunities, Protection, Self-Centeredness, Value, Waiting, Zeal

### Open It

- \* 1. What instance can you name when you decided to do what seemed best for someone else rather than what he or she wanted you to do?
- 2. What do you want people to say about you after you are gone?

### Explore It

- 3. How did David organize his army of supporters? (18:1-2)
- 4. For what reasons did David's followers ask him not to go into battle himself? (18:3)
- \* 5. What command did all the troops hear David giving his commanders as they left the city? (18:5)
- 6. How did Absalom's side (Israel) fare in the battle against David? (18:6-7)
- 7. How did the location of the battle add a unique element to the fighting? (18:6-8)
- 8. What happened to Absalom just as he encountered David's men? (18:9)
- \* 9. What was Joab's complaint against the man who reported Absalom's whereabouts? (18:10-11)
- 10. How did the soldier explain his reasons for not killing Absalom on the spot? (18:12-13)
- \* 11. How did Joab make sure that Absalom was not taken alive? (18:14-15)
- 12. How was the battle brought to an end? (18:16)
- 13. What became of Absalom and of the Israelite army? (18:17)
- 14. Why had Absalom built a monument to himself while he was still alive? (18:18)

### Get It

- 15. Why did David want his army to "be gentle with the young man Absalom"?
- \* 16. Why do you suppose Joab chose to ignore David's plea and killed Absalom himself?
- 17. To what extent can human beings control how they will be remembered?
- 18. In what sense was Absalom's death good news for Israel and Judah?
- \* 19. When is a person's fondest wish not in his or her best interest?
- 20. What can be good or bad about taking advantage of someone's sudden vulnerability?

### Apply It

- \* 21. What close friend can help you determine whether your desires really constitute what is best for you?
- 22. What habits can you establish that will partly ensure that you will be remembered favorably?

## David Mourns - 2 Samuel 18:19-19:8

**Topics:** Accusation, Advice, Alone, Apathy, Arguments, Attitude, Children, Confusion, Correction, Death, Depression, Discouragement, Encouragement, Enemies, Expectations, Family, Forget, Goodness, Grief, Hatred, Humiliation, Indifference, Injustice, Leadership, Love, Loyalty, Mourning, Neglect, Parents, Praise, Priorities, Resentment, Responsibility, Running, Shame, Unfairness, Victory

### Open It

1. What would you do if someone urged you not to grieve a loved one's death?
- \* 2. To what extent do you expect a leader to set aside his or her personal feelings for the good of the group?
3. Why would you or would you not want to be the one to break bad news to your best friend?

### Explore It

4. Who wanted to take the news of the battle's outcome to David? (18:19)
5. Why did Joab want to send a different messenger than the one who wanted to go? (18:20)
6. Whom did Joab send with the news of Absalom's defeat and death? (18:21)
7. What did Joab do when Ahimaaz insisted that he wanted to run with the news of Absalom's death? (18:23)
8. What did the watchman report to David, who was waiting inside the city? (18:24-26)
9. What did David assume about the two lone runners coming his way? (18:24-27)
10. Why did David assume that Ahimaaz came with good news? (18:27)
11. What positive message did Ahimaaz convey to David? (18:28)
12. How did Ahimaaz respond to David's inquiries about Absalom's safety? (18:29)
13. How did the Cushite answer the question from David? (18:32)
- \* 14. What was David's response to the news of the death of his son? (18:33)
- \* 15. Why was the spirit of victory squashed among David's supporters? (19:2-3)
16. What was David's lament from the time he learned the news of his son's death? (19:4)
- \* 17. What were Joab's accusations against David? (19:5-6)
18. What did Joab warn would happen if David didn't encourage the troops? (19:7)
19. What did David do in response to Joab's urgings? (19:8)

### Get It

20. Why was Joab hesitant to send the son of a priest to David with bad news?
21. Why did both of the messengers present the good news first?
- \* 22. Why was David's reaction confusing and disheartening to his followers?
23. Why is it difficult to give up hope about someone we love, even when there is no logical reason to hope?
24. Why is it impossible for grief and rejoicing to happen side by side?
25. What level of responsibility does God require of leaders?
- \* 26. To what extent does God expect a leader to set aside his or her own emotions and work for the good of the group?
27. Why is it wise to reward loyalty and sacrifice?

### Apply It

28. In what concrete way can you show appreciation for someone who has sacrificed on your behalf?
- \* 29. What are some responsibilities that you need to fulfill despite how you feel?
30. How can you reach out to someone who is dealing with bad news?

## David Returns to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 19:9-43

**Topics:** Age, Anger, Arguments, Change, Comparisons, Complaining, Confidence, Conflict, Death, Delegation, Desires, Differences, Disagreements, Enemies, Flattery, Generosity, Handicapped, History, Home, Hospitality, Humility, Hypocrisy, Initiative, Insults, Judging Others, Mercy, Popularity, Promises, Protection, Rationalizing, Relationships, Restoration, Swearing, Wealth

### Open It

1. What do you do when you have to judge between two completely different reports of the same incident?
- \* 2. What, in your opinion, is the right balance between justice and mercy for criminals?

### Explore It

3. What was the sentiment among the Israelites who had fled to their homes after the death of their leader, Absalom? (19:9-10)
4. How did David communicate to the leaders in Jerusalem his readiness to return? (19:11)
5. To what did David appeal to get the leaders to name him king once again? (19:12)
6. What special message did David send to Amasa, Absalom's general? (19:13)
7. What was the effect of David's overtures to the people of Israel and their leaders? (19:14)
8. Who were the people who rushed to meet David and offer their assistance as he returned from exile? (19:16-18)
- \* 9. What was the attitude of Shimei, who had cursed David on his way out of the city? (19:19-20)
10. How did Abishai think Shimei should be treated now that David was victorious? (19:21)
- \* 11. Why did David rebuke Abishai? (19:22)
12. What promise did David make to Shimei? (19:23)
- \* 13. Who came to meet David in an attitude of mourning and waiting? (19:24)
14. What was Mephibosheth's explanation of why he hadn't followed David when David retreated from the city? (19:26-27)
15. How did David's reaction to Mephibosheth indicate that he wasn't sure whom to believe? (19:29)
16. Why was David eager to reward Barzillai the Gileadite? (19:31-33)
17. Why was Barzillai not eager to accept the king's generosity for himself? (19:34-37)
18. Whom did Barzillai ask David to reward in his stead? (19:38)
19. Which of the troops from the previous fighting were with David when he crossed the Jordan? (19:40)
20. How would you characterize the disputing between the people of Israel and Judah once the kingship was restored? (19:41-43)

### Get It

- \* 21. What challenges faced David as he resumed the kingship of both Israel and Judah?
22. How many decisions did David have to make as soon as the outcome of the rebellion was settled?
23. From a position of power is it more difficult to deal with friends or enemies? Why?
24. Why do we want to be identified with the winner, even if we weren't initially on his or her side?
25. Why are there such differences between the various historical accounts of the same war?
- \* 26. How is mercy more conducive to building a strong consensus than vengeance?
27. What's most difficult for you when it comes to granting mercy?

### Apply It

28. What judgments will you have to make in the coming week for which you could seek wisdom from God?
- \* 29. What habits of thought and prayer can enable you to forgive a former enemy?



## Sheba Rebels against David - 2 Samuel 20:1-26

*Topics:* Advice, Caring, Conversation, Death, Deceit, Enemies, Escape, Faithfulness, Hiding, Leadership, Listening, Loyalty, Murder, Peace, Rebellion, Wisdom, Wives

### Open It

- \* 1. Whom do you know who has defused a potentially disastrous situation with reason?
- 2. What are the pros and cons of being a ruthless competitor?

### Explore It

- \* 3. Who was the troublemaker who started another rebellion against David? (20:1)
- 4. How did the kingdom split for and against David? (20:2)
- 5. How did David treat his concubines with whom Absalom had slept? (20:3)
- 6. Why did David give up on his first commander and turn to Abishai? (20:4-6)
- 7. Who were the soldiers who fought with Abishai? (20:7)
- 8. When Amasa met up with Joab, what was notable about Joab's military dress? (20:8)
- 9. How did Joab seem to be greeting Amasa? (20:9)
- 10. What did Joab do to Amasa? (20:10)
- 11. What message did one of Joab's men have for the troops who stopped to look at Amasa's body? (20:11)
- 12. What had to be done before the troops would move past Amasa's body and fight? (20:12-13)
- \* 13. Where did Joab and Abishai catch up with Sheba and begin a siege? (20:14-15)
- 14. What message did a wise woman in the city have for Joab? (20:16-19)
- \* 15. How did one woman save the city of Abel Beth Maacah from attack? (20:16-22)
- 16. What objective did Joab have which, once fulfilled, would remove the danger from the city? (20:20-21)
- 17. What did the wise woman get the people of the city to do? (20:22)
- 18. What did Joab do in response to the death of Sheba? (20:22)
- 19. Who led the entire army after this rebellion was put down? (20:23)

### Get It

- 20. Why did David feel he had no time to waste in defeating Sheba son of Bicri?
- 21. Why did Joab treacherously kill Amasa?
- 22. Why were the people of Abel Beth Maacah unwilling to defend Sheba?
- \* 23. Why was it in the best interests of David and Joab to let the rest of the troops go home once Sheba was dead?
- 24. What unique challenges face a country in the wake of a civil war?
- \* 25. Why might one wise person be of greater value to a group of people than many strong ones?

### Apply It

- \* 26. Which of the conflicts that you see in your daily life could benefit from a peacemaker's approach?
- 27. What can you do to help the next time a friend is plagued by a troublemaker?

## The Gibeonites Avenged - 2 Samuel 21:1-22

**Topics:** Armor, Atonement, Bargaining, Blessing, Children, Compassion, Death, Devotion, Family, Grief, Guilt, Judgment, Loyalty, Mourning, Persecution, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Strength, Suffering, Swearing, War, Zeal

### Open It

- \* 1. In your opinion how much does a leader or governor need to know about the history of the people he or she leads or governs?
- 2. In what ways do you feel the effects of the way your parents lived?
- 3. What characteristics make a person an honorable man or woman?

### Explore It

- 4. Why was Israel suffering famine during David's reign? (21:1)
- 5. How had the Gibeonites been wronged by Israel under Saul? (21:2)
- 6. What bargain did David propose to strike with the Gibeonites in exchange for their blessing on Israel? (21:3-4)
- 7. What price did the Gibeonites request to settle Israel's wrongs against them? (21:5-6)
- 8. What oath did David have to take into consideration in meeting the Gibeonites' demands? (21:7-9)
- \* 9. How did the mother of two of the slain Israelites demonstrate her devotion and grief for the dead? (21:10)
- \* 10. What gesture of respect did David make toward Saul's family in response to Rizpah's devotion? (21:11-14)
- \* 11. How did God respond to David's gestures to right old wrongs? (21:14)
- 12. What happened to David the next time he went out with his troops to fight the Philistines? (21:15-16)
- 13. What new policy was established after Abishai rescued David from mortal danger? (21:17)
- 14. How did Israel fare against the giant Philistine warriors, descendants of Rapha? (21:18-22)

### Get It

- 15. Based on the case of the Gibeonites, how seriously does God take our oaths, even those made to unbelievers?
- 16. How do unresolved sins come back to haunt us or successive generations?
- 17. As David got older, why was it more important to preserve his life than to have his leadership at the battlefield?
- 18. What delicate balance did David have to maintain as he made judgments on behalf of the nation?
- \* 19. How were Rizpah's actions more effective than if she had made a verbal plea to the king?
- 20. Why is it unwise for a government to completely satisfy one party at the expense of another?
- \* 21. In what sense are respect for the dead and justice for the living both ways of removing shame?

### Apply It

- 22. What unresolved conflict should you address today in order to prosper spiritually in the future?
- \* 23. What gesture of respect could help heal a damaged relationship?



## David's Song of Praise - 2 Samuel 22:1-51

**Topics:** Anger, Authority, Darkness, Death, Dishonesty, Enemies, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Foundation, Freedom, Help, Holiness, Honor, Hopelessness, Humility, Kindness, Light, Name, Obedience, Perfect, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Purity, Righteousness, Running, Salvation, Strength, Victory, Weaknesses

### Open It

1. What is your emotional response when you are honored by others? Why?
2. What kind of songs do you like to sing? When?
- \* 3. Where do you see God's hand at work in the world today?

### Explore It

- \* 4. What events prompted David to compose this song of praise? (22:1)
5. How did David characterize God's actions on his behalf in times of trouble? (22:2-4)
6. What images did David use to express being in mortal danger? (22:5-7)
7. What sort of creatures come to mind in David's description of God's anger? (22:8-11)
8. What is the weather metaphor with which David described God's power? (22:12-16)
- \* 9. How did David describe God's actions on his behalf? (22:17-20)
10. What are God's priorities for the behavior of His people? (22:21-25)
11. In what way do people experience God to have traits like their own? (22:26-28)
12. What images did David use to portray his supernatural strength with God's help? (22:29-30)
- \* 13. What aspect of God's nature does He make available to His people? (22:31-33)
14. What is David's word picture of a warrior of the Lord? (22:34-37)
15. What was the fate of David's enemies? (22:38-43)
16. Because of God's help, how was David regarded by people near and far? (22:44-46)
17. What are the reasons for David's resounding song of praise to God? (22:47-51)

### Get It

18. What aspects of God's character became the subject of David's song of praise?
19. What did David credit God with doing for him?
20. What are some of the images from nature that David used to describe God?
- \* 21. What conclusion did David draw from the fact that people fear and honor him?
22. What are some of the contrasts in this song of praise (such as darkness and light)?
- \* 23. In the course of this song, why did David praise God?

### Apply It

- \* 24. What psalm or hymn can you offer today in heartfelt thanksgiving to God?
25. How can you make your next success an opportunity to praise God for what He has done for you?

## The Last Words of David - 2 Samuel 23:1-7

**Topics:** Covenant, Desires, Evil, Fear, Growth, Holy Spirit, Judgment, Leadership, Light, Righteousness, Salvation, Words

### Open It

- \* 1. If you had the opportunity to make a farewell speech to your friends and loved ones before you died, what would you say?
- 2. Which do you consider yourself—an optimist or a pessimist? Why?

### Explore It

- 3. What are the different descriptions of David given in the introduction to his “last words”? (23:1)
- 4. Whose words did David speak? (23:2)
- \* 5. To what did David compare a righteous ruler? (23:3-4)
- 6. What did David claim about the status of his “house” before God? (23:5)
- 7. What were the characteristics of God’s covenant with David? (23:5)
- 8. In contrast to His treatment of David, how did God promise to deal with evil people? (23:6)
- \* 9. What farming analogy did David use to describe how evil persons are treated by God ? (23:6)
- \* 10. What practical method did David use (figuratively) to get rid of evil? (23:7)

### Get It

- 11. What kind of message did David leave in his last words?
- \* 12. Why is it important to us as believers to know that God will punish evil?
- 13. In what way can God’s people speak for Him?
- 14. In what way can you speak for God?
- 15. Why should we “fear God”?
- 16. What does it mean to fear God?
- 17. How do God’s criteria for excellence in leadership differ from the ones called for by conventional wisdom?
- 18. In what way does having a righteous leader affect the followers?
- \* 19. What gifts has God given you for the building up of His Kingdom?

### Apply It

- \* 20. What steps can you take to help your family be “right with God”?
- 21. How can your faith be built by rehearsing God’s covenant with you?

## David's Mighty Men - 2 Samuel 23:8-39

**Topics:** Achievements, Alone, Courage, Endurance, Greatness, Heroes, Honor, Leadership, Perseverance, Popularity, Power, Risk, Status, Victory, War, Zeal

### Open It

- \* 1. What sorts of feats make a person into a hero or heroine?
- 2. Why do you think people take extraordinary and unnecessary risks?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What select group is listed in this chapter? (23:8)
- 4. Who was considered "chief of the Three"? (23:8)
- \* 5. What story was circulated about Eleazar son of Dodai's endurance in battle? (23:9-10)
- 6. What was the story of Shammah in the field of lentils? (23:11-12)
- 7. What daring (and perhaps foolish) exploit was attributed to the three mighty men? (23:13-16)
- 8. Why did David refuse to drink the very water he had wanted? (23:16-17)
- 9. In what sense did Abishai receive greater honor, although he was not one of the Three? (23:18-19)
- \* 10. What stories were told about the chief of David's bodyguard? (23:20-23)
- 11. How many "mighty men" served King David? (23:39)

### Get It

- 12. What was special about the men in this passage?
- 13. Which of the mighty men were famous for the large numbers of enemy troops they had killed?
- \* 14. Which of the mighty men fought alone when everyone else fled?
- 15. Which of the celebrated feats of the mighty men could be considered foolish?
- 16. Besides accomplishments in battle, what feats made Benaiah famous?
- \* 17. What qualities did all of these people have in common that made them valuable to David?
- 18. How did the stories of the mighty men parallel some of the incidents in David's own life?

### Apply It

- 19. Which of God's mighty servants, past or present, can serve as an inspiration for your spiritual life this week?
- \* 20. What difficult task lies ahead of you for which you can ask God to give you courage?
- 21. To what friend or relative can you be a loyal and dedicated servant?

## David Counts the Fighting Men - 2 Samuel 24:1-25

**Topics:** Angels, Anger, Authority, Choices, Confession, Conscience, Consequences, Disagreements, Family, Foolishness, Gifts, Guilt, Mercy, Prayer, Punishment, Questions, Results, Sacrifice, Sin, Worship

### Open It

- \* 1. What modern day status symbols do we regard as “the more the better”?
- 2. What are some examples of the followers’ suffering when the leader does something wrong?

### Explore It

- \* 3. How did God use David to punish Israel? (24:1)
- 4. What did the king want his commanders to find out for him? (24:2)
- \* 5. Who objected to David’s plan and tried to dissuade him? (24:3)
- 6. Whose opinion prevailed as to what should be done? (24:4)
- 7. How long did it take for the commanders to go throughout the land counting the fighting men? (24:8)
- 8. How many fighting men did David have in Israel and Judah? (24:9)
- \* 9. What did David realize after the census was finished? (24:10)
- 10. What was David’s prayer when he realized his error? (24:10)
- 11. What did God instruct the prophet Gad to ask David? (24:11-12)
- 12. What choice did Gad present to David? (24:13)
- 13. What punishment did David choose from the three options God put before him? (24:14)
- 14. How many people died in the plague? (24:15)
- 15. Where was the angel of death when God instructed him to stop? (24:16)
- 16. What was David’s confession when he saw what was happening to Israel? (24:17)
- 17. What did Gad instruct David to do as part of ending the plague? (24:18)
- 18. What was Araunah’s response when David asked to buy the threshing floor in order to build an altar? (24:19-23)
- 19. Why did David insist on paying for all of the items for the sacrifice? (24:24)
- 20. What did God do for David and Israel when all of these actions were completed? (24:25)

### Get It

- \* 21. What does it mean that God “incited” David against Israel when God was angry with Israel?
- \* 22. Why was it wrong for David to want to count his fighting men?
- 23. How did David demonstrate his knowledge of God by the choice he made of the means of punishment?
- 24. How does God feel when He sees the suffering we bring on ourselves through our sin?
- 25. Why is a “cheap” sacrifice inappropriate to offer to the living God?
- 26. What sort of offering does God find acceptable from us today?
- 27. What does it mean to offer sacrifices to God today?
- 28. How can we make sure that the things we offer to God have not cost us nothing?

### Apply It

- \* 29. What temptation to count or calculate the value of your blessings can you resist by faith?
- 30. What can you offer to God that is valuable or important (not cheap)? How?