Cartoon of two people fighting with a spear

Description automatically generated

**David: Learning God’s ways.**

**Six Bible studies on David’s early life**

**By Rev. Mark R. Etter**

**Pastor Emeritus of Bethany Lutheran Church**

**3501 Turkeyfoot Road**

**Erlanger, KY 41018**

**859 331-3501**

[**Www.32daysdevotions.com**](http://Www.32daysdevotions.com)

For more Bible studies see [www.32daysdevotions.com](http://www.32daysdevotions.com)



On the website you will find over a dozen Bible study booklets like this one covering the Old and New Testament. Each of the six studies in each booklet has a four page leader’s guide and two page student guide that can be copied for your church’s use.

You will also find dozens of sermons arranged according to the liturgical church year that can be downloaded and edited to fit your local church.

You do not need to give me or the website credit if you so desire. My goal is simply to bring the word of God into the churches and help vacant congregations on Sundays that they are unable to get a pastor for worship.

P.S. Studies are reproducible so that only one copy of the study is needed by the class or small group. You have flexibility when the class you thought was going to be 15 suddenly becomes 25. You are free to copy and distribute the two-page student guides for a large formal class or the four-page leader’s guide for a small group. The focus is to get deep into the text and apply the lessons to your life. Each of the six chapters contains an introduction to help you get the big picture and is followed by thirteen questions to help you dig into the truth. Look for the other studies in the series and may the Lord bless your time in the word.

*Yours in Christ, Pastor Mark Etter*

**Introduction**

One would assume that as soon as God chose David to be king, that he would be king within the year. Nothing was further from the truth. David was anointed in 1 Samuel 16 at age 16 or so. He became king of all Israel in 2 Samuel 5 at the age of 40. Saul was chosen and became king within a short time in 1 Samuel. He began well but his character would prove to be his undoing. God did things different with David. He raised David from humble origins as a shepherd from Bethlehem to rule as Israel’s second king but only after a time of learning both the skills of leading people and having a God like character. The stories in these lessons show much many of the lessons that David learned. He would learn to put the Lord first and trust the Lord in difficult times. He would learn character so that he did not become like the kings of other countries but stood out as a man of God who taught people to follow God’s commands even when they were not easy.

Patience is still needed to be a child of God. We expect in this age of microwaves and cross country travel in hours not months that God should provide us with answers to prayer and needs of ministry quickly. Sometimes, the greatest barrier to ministry is the servant of God. For that reason, God still often gives us the answers to our prayers slowly. We need to learn character and to trust Him if we are to be successful. God often takes the long view and teaches His servants little by little so that they have success at each stage and grow so they are ready for the next part of the journey. We may get frustrated with this approach but God knows that we will fail if we have the success and resources that we need right away. Saul was blessed with great success and kingship early and it caused him to fail with pride (1 Samuel 13:8f), rash vows (1 Samuel 14:24f), and jealousy (1 Samuel 18:6f). David would have his downfalls, too, but he showed God’s character and repented of his sins as he led the people toward God.

As you study these lessons, seek out what the Lord was teaching David through the difficulties. Wrestle with his decisions and ask yourself how you might learn from the Lord by seeing His work in the life of David. The young David. Watch the faith of David grow and his decisions become better as he matures in the Lord. Look at the last decade of your life and ask if you have grown in your faith and character like David does in these chapters. God wants to teach you so that you can be a great servant for Him in the church. Realize that such learning takes time and a willingness to listen to the Lord through each season of life. The wise are willing to let the Lord teach them as they spend time in His word and think about what the Lord is teaching us in the challenging times as well as the good. God is more concerned about His people than He is about our success. It often takes difficult times in life like the ones David faced for us to stop and learn from a wise and loving God.

**Table of Contents**

**The chapter title, text, and theme**

**1 David and Goliath - 1 Samuel 17: 32-52 - Help people see God's glory**

**2. Saul's jealousy - 1 Sam 18:1-11 - Draw close to the Lord and let Him make you His servant**

**3. David and Jonathan - 1 Sam 20:1-17 - Find a friend, Be a friend**

**4. David at Nob and Gath - 1 Sam 21:1-15 – Seek out the Lord and live with character**

**5. Doing what is right - 1 Samuel 24: 1-22 – Trials from God create righteousness**

**6. Learning from God’s opportunities - 1 Sam 26:6-24 -Learning to trust God’s commands**

**How to use this Bible study**

Each of the six chapters contains an introduction to help you get the big picture and is followed by thirteen questions to help you dig into the truth. The questions will help you understand what is going on and apply it to your own lives. The leader’s guide provides answers to the questions that can be used in a Sunday Bible class or a small group. In a small group setting, you may find it helpful to copy the four-page leader’s guide for each person. There are also student guides provided in the back of the book. In a large setting, it may be easier to copy those guides so that each of the members of the class has a student guide for personal use. Notice that there are also three questions at the end of each lesson that can either be discussed as you meet together or assigned for people to think about in the coming week.

My prayer is that you and the members of your group or class can grow through these studies. The answers in the leader’s guide may challenge you to find deeper meaning and application for your lives. Life as a Christian can be difficult. It becomes even more difficult as we try to actively serve our Lord in ministry. The lessons that Jesus gave to help His disciples as they began the ministry of the new church are still important for us today. They can provide strength and help with our fears. As you study, realize that many of the questions have no single answer but are meant to help people find God’s help in their trials. If you need to take more than one week per lesson, do so and enjoy the discussion and the learning.

**Bibliography**

Beacon Bible Commentary

Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - Old Testament

Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

Layman's Bible Commentary

Life Application Study Bible.

New American Commentary

The Enduring Word Bible Commentary

The Expositor's Bible

**Copywrite 2023**

This book may be copied for church or small group use. The materials may not be sold in any other publication or distributed in print or electronically beyond the local ministry. May the Lord bless you as you learn and grow in His grace.

**1 David and Goliath**

**1 Samuel 17: 32-52**

**Big idea: Help people see God's glory**

Faith was what separated David from the rest of the army. The Israelite army and King Saul saw themselves too small to fight the giant. David saw that the giant was too small to fight against God. For forty days, Goliath had come into the valley mocking God. He saw the God of the Israelites as small and weak. Goliath's curses on God angered David. This pagan animal didn't know God's greatness and would feel God's anger and His servant's vengeance. When David stood before Goliath, the giant must have been insulted. A teenager with no armor was sent to battle the champion of the Philistines. What Goliath didn't see was the God who stood beside David. He underestimated the power of faith and the desire of David to show the world the greatness of his God. It only took one stone, and the giant was down. Suddenly, the Israelites on the hill stopped shaking with fear. With newfound courage and faith, they chased the Philistines ten miles back to their walled cities and homes. David had shown them and the world how great God was. He knew what God could do; now, the rest of the Israelites and the world around them did, too.

Faith still separates God's servants from those around them. Others remain quiet when the church is criticized, or God is mocked. They take it personally and want to lay low when difficulty arises. They forget that it is God's church and God's world to win. You conquer the world and overcome challenges with prayer and not with meetings. The enemy is stronger than we are. God is stronger than our enemy. We must do ministry with God's power and not our own. We must believe that if God wants this project to succeed, he will give us the needed resources. The world often scorns our God because it sees how little the church trusts God and sadly loves others as much as God. They will come to know God only if we love God and speak His truth. Therefore, every project should lead people to know about our God. We want them to see His love and experience the miracles only He can do. That may seem impossible, but one person's faith can lead others to see and follow the Lord. Our actions will encourage others in ministry and show the world what a great God we have.

Miracles can happen when people believe in God's power and control instead of their abilities and wisdom. David had experienced the strength and protection of God in his own life. He knew what God could do. He desired that everyone there knew God as he did. We often don't think one person or one church can make a difference. Things change when we realize that we walk with and serve God. Even one person can have a considerable impact on their church, its ministries, or even ministries that serve many churches. We must believe in God, listen to His guidance to follow His will for us, and then walk boldly, trusting in His power and protection. Soon, others will follow, and great things can happen in our midst. Others will catch our faith and believe in the Lord for themselves. The world will see what the almighty God can do with its eyes. Follow David and show people how great your God is. Even one person's actions can build the faith of a small army as they experience the heart of God in us. Together, we will do great things in God's name and let the world know how great our God is.

**1. Describe someone who intimidates you.**

For most people, someone who intimidates you is big and strong. We would be more intimidated by a football player than a jockey. It can also be someone constantly angry or demanding. It may be the person who always wants you to do things their way. Our natural desire would be to flee such a person and not have anything to do with them. As you read this text, consider what facing Goliath on the street or the battlefield would be like.

**Read 1 Samuel 17: 32-52**

**2. Verse 32. How did Saul respond to the idea of this boy, David, fighting Goliath? What experiences led David to believe God would deliver him?**

Saul is not impressed with this boy, who brashly thinks that he can defeat the giant. He has no experience, while Goliath has been a soldier for many years. Saul's faith was not in David or God. His army had stood on the hillside, fearing Goliath's taunts for days. God had been preparing David for this day. While caring for the sheep, David killed a lion and a bear with the simple weapons at his disposal. He knew how the Lord could defend him and defeat ferocious opponents. David also had the promise from God that he would one day be king. He knew that dead men could not fulfill that promise. God would spare his life even though the foe was enormous. David believed in God. Saul had a lack of faith.

**3. Verse 36. What motivated David to challenge Goliath? Why did this mean so much to David?**

Goliath had come down from the opposite hillside for forty days to mock the Jews and their God. His message was that the God of the Israelites was weak, and the gods of the Philistines were strong. David was angered by what Goliath said about God. Goliath had cursed the name of God and should be silenced so that everyone knew who was truly God. In verse 32, David had told those around him, who were all older than he was and experienced warriors, not to be disheartened. David would do what they had failed to do. He would fight for the Lord and defeat Goliath. For David, this was not just a battle between armies. Goliath had made it a struggle between God and the pagan deities. David loved His Lord and was willing to take up the challenge so that everyone could see that God was more powerful than all His enemies.

**4. Verse 36. How do you respond when the world mocks God or the Christian faith?**

The world still mocks our God. We may take it personally when someone ridicules us or the church. They are mocking God. They want to hear about something other than His values and morals. They don't like to acknowledge that God could be right. They can't hurt a God in heaven who they don't even believe exists, so they mock His beliefs and persecute His people. There is power in God's truth, so we must continue to live according to God's will and tell them what we believe when the chance arises. People need to see the power of God in His love. We will convince them and may win them over to faith if we show compassion to the widow, the orphan, and those whose lives have been shattered. It is love that will help them see the greatness of the gospel. They will realize our God cares about people like no other God. Don't stop speaking and living the word of God. It is the "sword of the Spirit" mentioned in Ephesians 6. God's armor protects us and helps us overcome Satan to save others.

**5. Verse 37. Whose battle is the battle with Goliath? How does David show more faith in the outcome than Saul?**

The Israelites had many battles with the Philistines. This one stands out because Goliath's words make it personal for God. David came to the contest in the name of God because he wanted everyone there to know that Yahweh was the one true God. Goliath had blasphemed the name of God and ridiculed the true God. David's great strength was that he identified with and trusted the Lord. Saul tries to put armor on David, but David realizes that the armor will get in his way and opts to use the weapons - a staff and a slingshot - that the Lord has given him. He took five stones, but with God's help, he only needed one of them. David would not face Goliath as a warrior but as one of the great shepherds of the Bible, like Abraham and Moses, who wielded the power of God, not the power of men.

**6. Verse 37. When facing trouble, where does our strength lie? How do we show we have confidence in God?**

As the church and ministries face challenges, it is essential to remember that it is God's church and not my church. Christians are only as strong as their connections with God. We often approach problems with meetings and plans when we should spend more time in scriptures and prayer. We can't defeat the enemy or solve the problem with our strength and wisdom. We must be soldiers fighting in God's army using His power. The enemy may be strong, but God is always stronger. Like David, we must believe in the Lord and use the tools He has given us. We may complain that there isn't enough money or people with the skills needed. If God wants us to overcome the problem and if we want to glorify God before the world, God will provide what is required. Trust God and believe He will be victorious, then follow where He leads you.

**7. Verse 43. Saul underestimates David. How does Goliath judge David as an opponent?**

Goliath must have been insulted. The Jews sent a teenager without a sword or shield into battle against him. Defeating David would mean nothing, and insulted his offer to let the battle between the champions of Israel and Philistia fight it out. Goliath vows to cut David in pieces and make him food for the birds and the beasts. At this point, it was only David who realized that this was a battle between Yahweh and the gods of the Philistines. Goliath judged the true God as weak because His people were shaking in their boots on the hill above the battle. Goliath thinks so little of God because the Israelite people think so poorly of their God. David will show Goliath and all the Philistines that they should fear Yahweh and show God's people that they need to trust Him as David does.

**8. Verse 43. In what ways does the world misjudge the church? How can we help them see what they miss?**

When the church doesn't believe in their God, the world doesn't think much of Him either. The scorn of Goliath and the world around us is understandable because of how little the church trusts and acts like God. If we want people to esteem God, we have to act lovingly like God. We must help tornado victims and people who lose their homes in our towns. We need to be holy like the Lord is holy, for the Lord is mocked when His people are no better than the world around them. We need to be bold in the ministries that we take on so that people around us see that we believe that God can do the impossible. The world can't see God. They can only see how our actions reflect God or how the church reflects the world around them. We need to be more like David and less like the Israelites in the hills shaking in their boots or the brothers who mistreated David. The world needs to see God's people giving Him glory if they are to respect God at all.

**9. Verse 47. What does David hope to prove with a victory? How does David's size enhance God's glory before all the people assembled?**

As David goes out to battle, he has something to prove. Oddly, he must have felt like Goliath was outnumbered since it was David and God against this giant. This battle was about the honor of God, for the pagan Goliath had insulted God, claiming that God was small and worthless. This battle was not the fight of two men but a fight for the hearts of the Israelites and the glory of God among the Philistines and all who heard about this battle. David's insight expressed in verse 47 is remarkable for any Old Testament people, especially someone so young. Perhaps he even recognizes that his small size shows the greatness of God even more. It is one thing for a mighty warrior from the Israelites to defeat Goliath. It is another thing when a teenager with no sword or armor defeats a giant. When David conquers Goliath, everyone will know that it is the work of God.

**10. What should be our goal as we take on Goliath-size tasks in ministry?**

Our goal should never be about us. Our goal should be about giving God glory in our world. Realize that we have a God who is tired of being only second-rate in the lives of this nation. Our culture thinks He is one God among many others, like Allah, Buddha, and the rest. As we take on Goliath-sized goals, we show how great our God is. When even small churches take on a seemingly impossible task, it helps the people around us to realize that only God could have brought about the outcome. Ministry is never about us. It is about giving glory to God so that those who have never seen God might want to be His people and have that power and mercy in their lives. We help the world and speak the message so that the world knows Him and respects what He does for us and others.

**11. Verse 52. How do David's faith and victory impact the other Israelites? What have they learned about God?**

Seeing the giant dead, the Jews rush down one hill and up the other, where the Philistines are to chase down and conquer the enemy. The army, who was shaking in their boots, now believes that their God is stronger than the enemy. David's actions have inspired Israel to trust the Lord and melted the confident hearts of the Philistines with fear of the one true God. The Israelites will chase the enemy about ten miles as they retreat to the walled cities of Philistia. David's dramatic victory has taught God's people that He is still powerful and will defend His people and His name. Throughout the reign of David, the people will understand the power of God as they win battle after battle in His name. None of the nations surrounding Israel, even Egypt, and Assyria, will be stronger than God in those days. David will lead his people to believe in God, ushering in a golden era for the Jews.

**12. Sometimes, miracles just need a leader. How can one person's faith lead others to serve the Lord and believe?**

In the church, it often takes just one person to stand up and lead, and the rest will follow. A lay leader believes in a mission project, and others will join. A lay leader champions the congregation's ministry among the poor of the community, and the church becomes known as a caring place. It often doesn't take a small army of people to do great things for the Lord. It just takes one person who believes in God and believes that God wants this project done for miracles to happen. The problem in the church, like it was on the Israelite's battlefield, is that people are more likely to doubt than to believe. None of the warriors of the Israelites, not even their extra tall king Saul, was willing to take up the battle because they didn't even consider that God would fight with them. If you only look at human resources, you will accomplish little. It is only when even one person sees what God can do and puts themselves on the line that God is given glory, and the church thrives in ministry for Him.

**13. How does the faith of David change the outcome of the battle and give glory to the Lord?**

Optimism comes when you focus on God's glory and strength, not your success or abilities. David had experienced the power of God in His own life and knew what the Lord could do. He had a heart for God and believed in the Lord. When the Lord elevated David to be king of Israel, the nation began a golden era of great faith and trust in the Lord. One person can still make a difference. A small group of people may join your church because one person keeps witnessing to the power of Jesus in their lives. The Sunday school can find revitalization just because one person talks about how the Lord loves the children and is willing to go into battle so that children of all ages get to know Jesus as their savior. Often, the struggle is with those of our own family or the leaders of God's people like David had to face his brother and King Saul, but those who persist will do miracles. Their faith can change the course of a congregation or ministry. Follow David and be bold, letting people see how great your God is. Your actions can build the faith of others as they experience the heart of God in you.

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1. What is the faith level of your church or small group? Are they down in the battle fighting for the Lord, or are they "shaking in their boots" up in the hills?

Deep 2. Why is it important to focus on God's glory and power rather than our success or strength? How does our focus impact how we act?

Deep 3. How can you let others see what God can do? Why is it important to let the world see the glory and love of God?

**2. Saul's jealousy**

**1 Sam 18:1-11**

**Big idea: Draw close to the Lord and let Him make you His servant**

At one time, Saul loved David (1 Sam 16:21) and treated him as part of the family. Jonathan saw this giant slayer as someone who was his equal and lavished him with gifts of friendship. The character and courage of David drew Jonathan to want to be friends with him and encouraged Saul to send David out with the troops and to make David one of his army generals. That love and devotion changed for Saul when David had success. The people love him, and the army wants to follow his lead in victorious battles. Their songs and admiration of David bring jealousy and anger to Saul. Instead of being pleased that he had another general who could bring victory, Saul was jealous that the wins were not his. As David rises in popularity, Saul becomes suspicious. God has already told Saul that he will be replaced (1 Sam. 15:28). Is David the replacement? The answer becomes apparent as Saul cannot overcome David because God was with him. David had the character of God, and people were drawn to his humility, courage, and care.

Those who have the character of Christ will find success in ministry and draw others to them. God will give them the ability to do miraculous things in life and ministry. Others will be drawn to them because of their compassion and character in the Lord. Sadly, there will always be people who are jealous or do not appreciate what we do. The world looks for faults in those who are kind or generous. They want to find any weaknesses to make themselves look good. Like David, we need to keep doing good and not let ourselves be concerned with those whose pride wants to be the best. In contrast, the world wants to rank people and be jealous of those with more money or appreciation from others. We have our worth in the Lord and will seek to please only him. Like David, we may go through tough times, but the Lord will be with us and help us do the ministry He has in mind for us to do.

What separated David from Saul was simple. Saul sought his glory and was jealous of anyone who threatened his position of honor. David was a Godly man of faith willing to serve others without worrying about his worth or any rise to power. He attracted others because of his faith, character, closeness, and dependence on the Lord. David fought battles so the Lord would be glorified and God's people could have safety and peace. Others praised him, but he knew his success came from the Lord. He was humble because he constantly remembered his humble roots in Bethlehem. God was with David and not with Saul. Success in life and ministry depends on one factor. It depends on our relationship with the Lord. God will make us successful in life and ministry. He will build our character, protect us from harm, and guide our path. It is not your personal wisdom, abilities, or wealth that will determine your fate. It is your closeness to God and your willingness to follow Him. David had a deep relationship with God, making him the man and later king who would impact the nation for good.

**1. What is the Christian way to respond to another's success? Why are people often jealous of success?**

Christians should celebrate each other's success, especially if it benefits the church or our local congregation. The fact that someone we know receives a promotion or an honor in our community is something special and should make us happy. If someone has great success in our congregation, that should be celebrated because the program that has done well will benefit all of us. While their success doesn't usually take anything away from us (after all, we probably don't work for the same firm that gave them the promotion), it often can lead us to jealousy. We see that the advancement brought a raise in salary, and we wonder why we can't earn that much. We might feel underappreciated if someone else receives accolades for their service and we don't get recognition for ours. The success of others sometimes threatens our ego.

**Read 1 Sam 18:1-11**

**2. Verse 1. How does the passage describe the bond between David and Jonathan? What do you think drew Prince Jonathan to David?**

Previous passages in 1 Samuel 13:2-3 and 14:1-14 have shown the faith and courage of Jonathan. Unsurprisingly, he is impressed with David's stand against the giant or the modesty and courage of this younger man who was willing to serve and trusted God while others were afraid. Jonathan may have been excited to find someone with the same spirit and character as he did and was fearless in taking on the enemies of Israel. While Jonathan is often thought to be at least 20 years older than David since he is already commanding the armies of Israel, the two develop an extraordinary bond. They became soul mates like men who fight together in battle often do. Their bond would continue even when it became clear that David and not Jonathan would become the next king.

**3. Verse 1: What draws you to others so that you want them to be your friend?**

While we may look for someone with similar interests, the quality that makes them someone you stay close to will be their character. Are they a person who is willing to serve and help others? Are they a person who is modest and honest? Do they care about others and are eager to make sacrifices for others? Such qualities are often rare in our society. They should be qualities that Christians have because of the Christ who lives in them. Such friendships between Christians put jealousy aside and are as concerned about wanting good things to happen to their friends as they want those things for themselves. Friendships like David and Jonathan can last all our lives and be a tremendous benefit to us. We have someone who will help us in any situation and with whom we can talk about our greatest fears and joys. These friendships are worth the bother, for they will be great blessings.

**4. Verse 4. How does Jonathan express his friendship with David? What do you think such actions meant?**

The gift of clothing and armor shows the depth of Jonathan's friendship with David. Jonathan was the crown prince, and David was the last-born son of Jesse. Giving these gifts showed that Jonathan was humble and considered David an equal after seeing his courage in defeating Goliath. Many think this is a sign that David told Jonathan that Samuel had anointed him and that he was destined to be the new king. I don't think that would be something David would have shared this early in their relationship. It would have been uncivilized when you were just making friends with Jonathan. I see this as a measure of Jonathan's respect for David and his appreciation of his victory over Goliath for the country. Jonathan and David have found a unique friendship that will grow as David begins to be part of the court and later becomes a brother-in-law to Jonathan.

**5. Verse 5. Why does Saul promote David, and how do the officers respond to David's leadership? Why was he so popular?**

David was a perfect candidate to lead troops for Israel. Wherever Saul sent him, David went and never seemed to make a fuss over his assignment and always won the battles for the nation. A king certainly likes a commander who submits to his king and keeps winning battles. Soldiers and other officers want a winner as well. Troops like a commander with fewer deaths among the soldiers and who keep winning battles. Other officers like someone they can trust who will command them smartly in battle. The victory that David gave the army by defeating Goliath continues in these early campaigns. The text even hints at why David is so effective. The Hebrew word translated as "successful" is used in Deut. 29:8 to speak of how God will help someone "prosper" who keeps the words of the covenant given at Sinai. David is following the Lord in his life, and God is blessing David and those who follow him in battle.

**6. Verse 5: What does it take to be a leader today that others will follow eagerly?**

While some might be willing to follow even an evil person if they bring prosperity to those who stick with them, most want to follow a winner with character. A godly person who is kind, courageous, humble, and successful is the type of person who attracts followers. David was a good model for us throughout his early life. He continues to live a godly life following the character and values of God, and so God rewards him and those around him. Godly leaders think of the people around them and seldom do things for personal benefit. They are concerned about others and trust the Lord to help them with impossible tasks.

David was such a leader, and we would be wise to find and follow such people in life to enjoy the blessings that the Lord gives His people.

**7. Verse 7. What refrain is sung by the women? How has David's success affected the people of Israel?**

David's character and success bring honor from others. Both the members of the court and the people in the countryside love him. The acclaim starts after the stunning defeat of Goliah when the army of Israel chases the Philistines for 10 miles. In Hebrew fashion, echoing Exodus 15, the people sing praises to the victories of God and His armies. David becomes popular, and because David's victory over Goliath made the victory possible, he gets more credit than Saul. David has beaten the enemy and will continue to beat them as one of the generals of the Israelite army. David was happy to hear their words, but it didn't affect his actions or his thinking about himself. Sadly, Saul will be jealous because of the praise instead of being happy because the nation is having success and a measure of peace that was not present before. David was too successful in the eyes of Saul.

**8. Verse 7: What are the dangers of success for us and for those we care about?**

Our character can bring honor from others. If we are not careful, we can get a swollen head and start needing the accolades of others rather than doing the good things we do just because of our character and values. David was wise when he heard the affirming words but didn't let it change his actions or opinion of himself. He kept the heart and mind of a servant even in this time of great success. The other danger of success is that it can cause jealousy in others. The praise of others causes Saul to judge himself by their recognition rather than celebrating that David has joined him in ridding the nation of their enemies. Saul had a faithful general who went wherever Saul sent him and had great success for the kingdom. In truth, David's success brought riches and success to Saul, but his jealousy didn't let him see that even as David humbly served the nation and its king.

**9. Verse 8. How did Saul respond to David's popularity? What does Saul say he fears, and why will it come true?**

While the women's words and the army's pleasure did not affect David, they enraged Saul. Saul doesn't want to share the glory with anyone. He has already forfeited the kingdom as Samuel has told him that God is taking it away from him (1 Samuel 15:28) and giving it to an anonymous neighbor. The suspicion creeps into his mind from a guilty conscience that the new king will be David, so Saul begins to watch David with jealousy. The continued success of David showed that he had a close relationship with God, which Saul realizes he doesn't have. His worst fears will come true, and his continued distance from God also keeps his son Jonathan from the throne. David's heart is in tune with God. Saul is proud and wants to get rid of the competition.

**10. What are the dangers of comparing yourself to someone else? How do such comparisons destroy the church?**

In comparison, everyone needs to be ranked. We get jealous of someone in leadership in our church or the church across town taking in more members. Instead of seeing the successes of fellow church members as making our church better and things better for us, we want the honor and the prestige of having those successes for ourselves. We start working against others in the church or competing with other churches rather than celebrating what is happening for the kingdom of God. Saul saw his kingdom have victory over its enemies and peace for its citizens partially because of what David was doing. His pride wanted those triumphs for himself rather than working with David to ensure the kingdom was more powerful. Pride destroys teams and is often Satan trying to keep the church from destroying his kingdom. Let God use you, and don't worry about the false comparisons.

**11. Dig 6 Verse 12. Why would Saul be unable to overcome David in the years to come? Why was the Lord with David and not with Saul?**

Saul is a placeholder. David is not ready to take over the throne since he is only around 20 years old. God will have to help him learn to do battle and mold his character over the many years of escaping Saul and leading his group of misfits in combat through the southern regions of Israel. God will protect and teach him to trust the Lord rather than take Saul's life. God will help him be a courageous man and a leader of men. Saul would never be able to overcome David because God had chosen the next king and prepared David for that role. Saul had forsaken God and not listened to God. He had shown that the love of the Lord was not in his heart and that he was just like the other kings around him. To keep his throne, he would have to defeat the Lord, not David, and that was something he could not do.

**12. In life, what is the key to success? Is it about being the smartest or most talented?**

The key to your success is to stay close to the Lord and live with His values and character. Your success as a group is simply because each person has a unique role and ministry for the Lord. You may be jealous that you can't sing or speak like someone else. What you should be looking at is how God has made you someone who can manage the finances of the church or who can witness to or teach others. We often feel small when we compare our weaknesses to another person's strengths. We need to cling to the Lord, spend time in His Word, and let the Lord show us what He has prepared us to shine. We may not be the most talented, but those who cling to the Lord will find that He gives them unique talents and spiritual gifts so that they can do what others can't. Don't compare yourself to others. Find what the Lord wants you to do so you can sparkle.

**13. What separated David from Saul and others? What lesson should we learn from his life?**

David lived as a man of God. He was an honest man of faith who was willing to serve others and was attractive to others because of his faith and character. David also dedicated his work to the Lord. He fought the giant to bring glory to God when the giant and others thought so little of God. David shows us the necessity of letting God, not others, be the source of our value. If we are humble, God will use the talents and resources He has given us to accomplish great things. He will protect us from selfish people and help us grow in our faith and abilities. Pride brings a fall and makes others God wants us to work with into rivals we must defeat. Humility lets us work with others and build upon their God-given successes so everyone is better off. Live as God's servant, and you will accomplish far more than those who think they are wise or talented.

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1: How strong is your relationship with God? What could others point to in your life that shows that "The Lord is with you"?

Deep 2: How does your character influence how you deal with others and how you impact the world around you?

Deep 3 As you ask the Lord for a closer relationship with Him, what characteristics of David in the text would you like to have?

**3. David and Jonathan**

**1 Sam 20:1-17**

**Big idea: Find a friend, Be a friend**

The friendship of David and Jonathan began after David defeated Goliath. The crown prince Jonathan gave David his robe and weapons because he saw someone who had the bravery and faith that was rare in Israel. In a time of trouble, the friendship is tested because of Saul's jealousy of David. Jonathan is put in a difficult position because he wants to be loyal to his father and to his friend. David will seek out his friend for answers, and Jonathan will respond with his willingness to test his father, Saul, so that David will know what the future will bring. Both show great love and respect for each other as their friendship is tested. Their actions show the depth of what a friendship under God can be. Their loyalty and trust in each other show what a friendship can be. They commit themselves to each other's protection no matter how the situation plays out in the years ahead.

Like David, we will all have times of crisis in our lives. We will have health concerns and problems with our spouse or kids and need someone to listen and help. A Christian friend is someone you can depend on in ways that other acquaintances will never do. They will listen and sift what we are saying and feeling through the word of God. They will help you find answers even if there is a sacrifice to help you. Their love for you will be based on the love that Christ has given them as much as their bond with you. Such friends will be there through thick and thin, just as Jonathan was for David. They will commit to helping you and being your friend even when such a friendship gets tough. God did not intend for us to be alone. He has given many of us a spouse that we can depend on. He often provides friends of the same sex as well who can serve each other and help us through the bumpy road of life.

We all need to recognize that everyone needs a friend. We need someone who will lift our spirits and help us carry our burdens. Sadly, such friendships are hard to find in this fast-paced and technical era. We have many acquaintances but few friends of the caliber we see in this text. The friendship in this text gives us a model for the relationships we need in life. Fellow Christians offer an advantage to such companionships. They are people we can pray with and share God's value system. They are people who have learned to make sacrifices for others and have God's love in their hearts. Such friendships take time and effort. One must make time for such relationships and sacrifice to help others we care about. The tradeoff is tremendous. We have a person who will help us when life gets rough and who can celebrate with us when joy comes our way. Such friendships can last a lifetime and bring benefits for years to come.

**1. How would you describe a friend? What do you think is necessary for lasting friendships?**

Answers will vary, but I always think of who I would be willing to call at 2 AM if I needed help or who I would want to be the first person to share some joyful news with. Family comes to mind at those times, but sometimes, we just need someone willing to help. In this text, we will learn about the Godly friendship of David and Jonathan. You can see how their friendship showed itself under challenging times, and add what you think is necessary to have a deep and lasting friendship. 

**Read 1 Sam 20:1-17**

**2. Verse 1. When David is afraid, where does he go for answers? How does his perception of the situation differ from Jonathan's?**

David leaves the relative safety of Naioth, where he is with Samuel, to travel to Gibeah, Saul's hometown, because he needs a friend. It might seem unreasonable to many, but he needed advice and answers to his questions. Only a friend like Jonathan could give him the answers that he needed. David was in a quandary. Saul had tried to kill him with a spear (1 Sam. 19:10), trap him in his home (1 Sam. 19:11f), and even sent men to capture David (1 Sam. 19:20f). Jonathan denies that his father has any ill against David. David's question asks what Saul thought David had done but also wants to know what Jonathan thinks of David's actions.

**3. Verse 1. In what situations would you seek the advice of a friend? What do you need most in those circumstances?**

All of us have crisis times in our life. We may have health concerns or struggles in our marriage. We may want help deciding what to do, or we just may, like David, want to know if we have caused this disaster on ourselves. A friend can be honest with us and will see the situation better than a stranger. They can give straight answers and give us the encouragement and comfort needed in this situation. Rather than trying to manage by ourselves, we may take the opportunity to discuss life's problems with someone we can depend on. Sometimes, having the chance to verbalize what we think and feel is what we need most.

**4. Verse 3. What does David see that Jonathan has missed? In what ways is it hard to be honest with his friend?**

After witnessing several attempts by Saul to kill him and having other attempts by Saul's men to take him captive, David has no reason to doubt Saul's determination to have him eliminated. Jonathan's reply seems naïve, but he thought that his relationship with his father was closer than it was. Under normal circumstances, Saul probably confided with his son on every matter. David was different. Saul knew their close relationship and would have kept his feelings about David to himself. David is discouraged and afraid. He knows "there is only a step between me and death" (verse 3). Saul would not quit till he succeeded. David's words here must have been hard because he knew of Jonathan's close relationship with his father, Saul. He accused Jonathan's father of wanting to kill him and knew that would be tough for Jonathan to believe.

**5. Verse 3. Why is honesty important in a friendship? What qualities must temper our honesty as we speak with friends?**

Friendship is not very strong without honesty. We must be able to share our feelings and the truth, even if it is uncomfortable. Otherwise, we are dancing around topics and will seldom get the help we need. It can also mean that we have to be honest about our failures and let people see the toxic side of us that is hidden from the public. Unless someone cares about us deeply, our dark side and struggles will turn someone off, so they don't want to acknowledge what we have said. Transparency is important in a relationship if we want real answers and direction. That transparency should always be tempered with love and concern for the other person. If someone has hurt us or knows they will not agree with us, we must speak the truth in love. Our goal is not to destroy them to protect ourselves but to work through a difficult situation as David and Jonathan did.

**6. Verse 5. What does David propose as a way to find out the truth? How does this put their friendship on the line?**

David presents a plan to force Saul to reveal his true intentions toward David. David would be missing from a feast that he was expected to attend. David would be safely out of Saul's way by merely being away from the royal court for two days. Jonathan would be a passive observer of his father's behavior but would have to lie about David's absence. If Saul reacted positively to David's excuse, there would be no reason for fear. An angry response that he was insulted by David's absence would show that Saul was determined to harm David. The plan was a test of their friendship, as Jonathan had to put his father to the test. To Jonathan's credit, he cared enough about David to help David in his distress. He was willing to listen and find out the answers that David needed so that he could proceed safely in Saul's court. Both had a lot to lose if the accusations proved true, but Jonathan agreed to the plan to put the matter to rest one way or another.

**7. Verse 5. What does David's plan say about the cost of friendship? What sacrifices are often necessary to help a friend find answers?**

Jonathan has a difficult choice. He has to believe the concerns of his friend, which paint Saul as an angry man. He is not ready to believe it is true, but he has to listen to David's concerns. Friendship often means that we must acknowledge someone else's opinion, even if it is radically different from our own. We listen and help them seek answers because we care about them and can see that something troubles or upsets them. Sometimes, we must go to the authorities to help them find solutions. Other times, it may mean that we have to discuss delicate subjects we would rather avoid. Friendship is based on our love for the other person and our desire for their well-being. That may take time, resources, and the willingness to discuss delicate subjects we would rather avoid. We will do whatever it takes to help our friends in challenging situations.

**8. Verse 12. What does Jonathan promise? How does this put Jonathan in a difficult place as he tries to remain loyal to David?**

Jonathan takes the bold leap of promising to do precisely what David asks. It will cost him. His father will flare up in anger at him (verse 30) and throw a spear at his son. The plan will cause him the pain of knowing a truth he would have rather avoided. The plan protected David but put Jonathan directly in the line of fire. One has to believe that he made the sacrifice because he hoped that David was wrong and his father would be vindicated by his actions. If his father did act in anger, he could at least protect his friend. In this promise, Jonathan was taking responsibility for the life and escape of David. His loyalty to David made his father feel abandoned and betrayed. Jonathan loved them both and wanted to be true to them both. It was a tough place to be in.

**9. How is loyalty a vital part of deep friendships? What does it take to earn that kind of loyalty?**

Christian friends put themselves on the line for their friends. We do things that seem awkward or embarrassing to help out someone who we care about. We regularly visit a hospital bed or find ourselves in scary circumstances to encourage someone or help them find out the information they need. We know that God will help us if we are behaving honestly and with good intentions. He will give us the words we need and protect us in difficult situations. We help others because God wants us to be concerned about one another in His name. We make sacrifices for other Christians because God has sacrificed so much for us. In the best of Christian friendships, we act on our Lord's behalf as we care for one another. Our loyalty comes from our love for God and because our friend has been loyal and caring to us. We are often repaying the sacrifices that they have made for us.

**10. Verse 14. What promise does Jonathan request from David? How may this be awkward for David if there is a split between Saul and himself?**

If David is the rightful heir to the throne and is chosen by God for the task, it creates a problem for Jonathan. The conventional wisdom of the time says that you eliminate all potential rivals to the throne when you ascend to that high state. In these words, Jonathan reaffirms his oath to serve the house of David and asks David to reaffirm his commitment to serve the house of Jonathan as well. No written covenant agreement exists, but their word is solid and can be trusted. The jealousy of Saul will not separate them. They pledge to work together and not let the kingdom enter civil war. David would honor this oath, but it wasn't God's will to join the two families. Jonathan would be killed in battle (1Sam. 31:1-2), and Jonathan's sister Michal, who was David's wife, would die without any children (2 Sam. 6:16f). God kept David from having to choose what to do with the line of Saul and kept the people from having to choose one family or the other.

**11. Verse 16. What is Jonathan's final promise to David? How does this show the character of their friendship?**

A friend commits themselves to you for life. Jonathan commits to David even before he finds out whether David's fears about Saul are valid or not. No matter what Jonathan finds out, he wants to be friends for life. In one respect, that is amazing because Jonathan has come to understand that David will be the next king and not him. Jonathan is a godly man willing to let the Lord decide the course for the kingdom and himself. God has anointed David, and Jonathan can accept that. He has seen the good that David is doing for the nation and is eager to be part of what this godly man is doing. He knows that the Lord is working in David, and those who serve with David will be blessed. His only concern is that he can serve as David's right-hand man instead of being tossed aside like most would do when changes come. Sadly, Jonathan is killed in battle with Saul. It would have been nice to see this friendship develop as they both walked with the Lord.

**12. How long will true friendships last? How does faith in the Lord allow those friendships to thrive?**

True friendships can last a lifetime if they are built on the character and love of the Lord. They may end up on the opposite sides of the discussion at church. They may find that jobs and schooling put them on the far side of the nation. That will not matter. The friendship that they build will withstand any distance. They have come to need the encouragement and clear understanding that comes in discussions. They look for the smile and help a true Christian friend can give. Their values and Christian character will keep them together. Their times of prayer and worship together will allow them to be strong. They will each commit to following what the Lord decides is best for themselves and others around them. Loyalty and commitment will come because the Lord is with them, and God ministers to them through each other.

**13. Based on this text, how would you describe a Godly friendship?**

There are six things that I see in the friendship of David and Jonathan that all of us should aspire to. First, a friend is the first one that you go to for help. David will seek Jonathan out at the first sign of trouble. Second, a friend is someone you can be honest with, even if it is difficult, as it must have been for David. Third, a friend will help you find the answers to your problems. Jonathan didn't have to help, but he was eager to do so despite the cost. Fourth, a friend will sacrifice himself for you just as Jonathan did for David. Fifth, friendship is reciprocal, and the commitment goes both ways. Finally, friendship is for life. David mourned the loss of Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17f) and called him "brother." Godly friendship adds another dimension to the friendships that we have in life. Here is a person who prays with you and loves you with God's love. They will give Godly wisdom and help you grow in your faith. They will make sacrifices, often without asking, because of the sacrifices that God has made for them. When the chips are down, these are the kinds of friendships that you want in life.

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1 What advantage do you see in having a friendship like David and Jonathan have in the text?

Deep 2: How good are you at listening when a friend tells you something you don't want to hear?

Deep 3: How do you remain loyal to one friend when others might consider that a betrayal of their friendship?

**4. David at Nob and Gath**

**1 Sam 21:1-15**

**Big idea: Seek out the Lord and live with character**

Even the Lord's anointed must grow in his faith and trust before he is ready to serve as king. David has just learned that Saul wants to kill him. He begins well by seeking the Lord in the city of Nob, where the high priest and the Tabernacle are located. Things quickly turn bad as David lies about his reason for being there. He is afraid and desperately needs food and weapons that he can't obtain in Gibeah because he must stay away from Saul. When David sees one of Saul's servants, he will make things worse by running to the enemy of Israel to be out of Saul's control. His residence in Philistia soon threatens his life. He must pretend to be insane to escape the hands of those who want him killed in the foreign land. David learns to seek and trust the Lord during this time of trouble. Psalm 56 records his plea for mercy when he finds himself in the hands of the Philistines. Psalm 34 records his thanks to the Lord for delivering him out of their hands. He had gone from good to bad to worse, but the Lord mercifully saved him.

It is often the troublesome times of life that also help us grow in our faith. Like David, we may start well, but fear and desperation cause us to seek to save ourselves instead of turning to the Lord for help. We pursue our plans instead of relying on God's ways because we want to escape the pain. We go from one disaster to the next as nothing seems to work. We need to pray as David did in Psalms 34 and 56, and the sooner, the better. We need to seek out the Lord and trust Him to deliver us from the enemies and challenges surrounding us. We need to avoid the sins of lying to protect ourselves or abandoning the Lord as David did by going to Philistia when we find ourselves overwhelmed. It is the Lord alone who can save us. He alone has the wisdom and the power to provide the path for our future and to protect us along the way. It would be nice if we could learn those lessons only by reading the Bible, but we often have to learn them hard. We must be driven to our knees before we pray to Him.

David would be a different man after this event. His heart would be turned to the Lord as witnessed by the over 20 psalms that reflect David's fugitive years in the Bible. He would be the noble David who would not kill Saul when he had the chance and who seeks the Lord for answers when his family is taken at Ziglag. Little by little, David will become the man of God who will lead God's people to seek the Lord's will in life. In the same way, we must come to the Lord first and not last. Ask the Lord for help and direction to know His will for us. Learn as David will to be patient. He will be an exile for ten years before he takes the throne. God will save him during that time and teach him lesson after lesson. Sometimes, there is a reason God makes us wait, and we need to trust Him through the difficult times of life. Through it all, live with Christian character. It is never right to lie or to break the other commandments just to save ourselves. Sin brings harm. Righteousness brings blessings. God has answers for us, and we need to learn to follow him every day of our lives.

**1. How well do you deal with spur-of-the-moment guests? What is your greatest struggle?**

Having been the one to drop in as their pastor without notice, some can have the messiest house possible and feel welcome with a person dropping in, and others struggle when the home just looks picked up. I am somewhere in between. I enjoy someone that I am close to, no matter what the house looks like. Others interrupt life or make me feel self-conscious. I find people who often struggle with the time that such guests take up, the condition of their homes, or the need to change focus for the day. Let the group know how you do with interruptions and if you have a particular struggle when they come.

**Read 1 Sam 21:1-15**

**2. Verse 1. Where is David's first stop as he flees King Saul? How does Abimelech greet him when David comes to him?**

David's life has fallen apart. Saul, who had welcomed him into the army and given David his daughter, now wants him dead. He flees to Nob, where the high priest and the Tabernacle were located. It was only about three miles from where David had met with Jonathan (1 Sam. 21), and David probably thought he could find refuge and help from the priests there. That he would begin his 10-year exile from Saul at the house of the Lord shows his devotion to the Lord. His arrival without others, however, frightened Ahimelech, the high priest. He knew of David's connection to Saul and the army, so it seemed strange that David would arrive without some military or royal following. Perhaps he had heard of Saul's pursuit of David to Ramah (1 Sam 19:18f), which threatened the prophets there.

**3. Verse 1. What benefits have you experienced when you start with the Lord in difficult times?**

We often begin with prayer when we find ourselves in a difficult place. Prayer at the bedside of a loved one brings calm as we give our troubles to the Lord. It often helps us find answers when we pair our prayers with reading God's word. Going to the Lord when we have problems is always a blessing. We are seeking help from the one who is our strength and helper. If we are patient and listen to the Lord rather than telling him what we want Him to do, we will find that the Lord will bring us through life's challenges. Starting with the Lord is an excellent beginning in any struggle, for the Lord is our strength and deliverer.

**4. Verse 2. How does David explain the fact that he is alone? What do the words tell you about David's desperation?**

When questioned, things start to go wrong for David. Instead of telling the High Priest the truth and seeking God's will, David tells a lie. Many have tried to whitewash the lie by saying that God is David's king. He indeed needed to be secretive about the Lord's plans for him. His wording, however, would suggest to Ahimelech that Saul has given him a covert mission. He may have also been trying to protect the High Priest (although David's actions bring the High Priest great trouble in 1 Sam. 22:17). Sadly, David is scheming instead of trusting. His visit to the Tabernacle starts with good intentions but soon turns terrible. David is so desperate for food and a weapon that he deceives Ahimelech and asks for bread and the sword of Goliath.

**5. Verse 2. How does Satan lure us into doing wrong things when faced with tough times? What has been the result?**

Our minds know what to do, but our emotions take control. We know lying is not right, but we start telling white lies when confronted to protect ourselves. We know it is wrong to speed, but we are late for an appointment, so we fudge the limits and soon find ourselves facing a ticket and being late because of a traffic stop. It seldom goes well for us. There is a reason that God commands us to follow His will. Lying, stealing, or getting caught up in lust isn't good for us. All those things have terrible consequences. Your character will be shown during a crisis. You may start with Godly intentions, but if your heart gets caught up in fear, you will act like a child of the world and not a child of God. God wants to help us to be strong in times of temptation, and He will give us the ability to do his will even if it is not easy.

**6. Verse 5. How does David embellish his tale to reassure the priest and obtain what he needs?**

Ahimelech is willing to share the consecrated bread if David's soldiers were ritually clean. David assures the High Priest that he and his fighting men are clean as they go out on the special missions for Saul. Sadly, there is no mention of other men with David in chapters 20 or 21. David seems to be alone and running from Saul. It is not until chapter 22 that David starts gathering the distressed people who will become his fighting men around him. They will become David's first army as he wanders and tries to escape Saul. In this text, David is desperate for food, and the loaves of bread will provide food for him for several days. He continues to spin the story of being on a special mission for Saul so that he gets the bread that he needs.

**7. Verse 10. Where does David go to flee Saul, and why does this turn out to be a mistake?**

As if things couldn't get any worse, David decides to lee into the land of the Philistines. Perhaps he had seen Doeg, the head shepherd of Saul, and felt that it was time for him to leave Israel. He chooses to go to the hometown of Goliath, Gath. It has only been a few years since that famous battle between David and Goliath. On that day, David's victory allowed the Israelites to slaughter the Philistines up to the gates of this city. Now, fear had replaced faith. He abandons Israel but seems to leave God as well. David wants to find sanctuary without endangering others. David's arrival arouses suspicions among the people of Gath and recalls David's victories as Saul's servant. David began to realize that his life was in danger in Gath as much as in Gibeah with Saul.

**8. Verse 10. Why does one sin or mistake often lead to other bad choices? Why is it so hard to do the right thing?**

One thinks of a later sin in David's life. Having committed adultery with Bathsheba, David tries to bring Uriah home to make it look like the child belongs to Uriah. Failing to succeed at that lie, David will have Uriah killed to cover up David's sin. One sin leads to another because David has to cover up what he has done. We often must lie a second time to cover the first lie or have to blame someone else when our solution for a problem doesn't work. It is easy to go down a slippery slope when we have begun in the wrong direction. We keep getting deeper into trouble as we try to fix things and save ourselves from the first sin. It is much easier to keep the facts straight with the truth than it is a lie. It is easier to do the right thing instead of facing consequence after consequence as sins grow with our solutions to the problem. God never wanted David in the position of trying to save himself in Gath, and God doesn't want us to follow the path of sin where things keep getting worse.

**9. Verse 13. How does David fix the problem he created by fleeing Israel with his cleverness?**

David's reputation as a great warrior preceded him, so he was seen as a threat and not a blessing. His solution was to pretend to be insane. He began to mark the gates and treated himself disgracefully by letting saliva run down his face to convince the Philistines not to harm him. Both Psalms 34 and 56 come from this time in David's life. Psalm 56 emphasizes the verbal attacks and danger David faced from the Philistines. The experience causes David to remember God's promises. Psalm 34 is a hymn of praise that shares that David did a lot of praying during this time of fear and trouble. God caused Achish, the king of Gath, not to kill David and allow David to escape to Israel and the cave of Adullam. Indeed, this was a time when David learned to trust the Lord and saw the foolishness of trying to solve his problems without the Lord.

**10. What is the wise choice David missed earlier when he hit rock bottom?**

David hit rock bottom in Gath. He had started well going to the Tabernacle but had gone from bad to worse as he tried to solve his problems. It would have been much better to pray to the Lord at the beginning instead of the end. Sadly, it is often only when we hit rock bottom that we turn to the Lord. Life gets so bad that we realize that we can't solve the problem and begin to pray. We could avoid the pain if we started in prayer instead of waiting until things got so bad that we feared for our lives or our future before we turned to the Lord for help. The hardship made David return to the Lord and ask for God's mercy (Psalm 56:1) and pledge to trust in the Lord (Psalm 56:3). We often wonder why the Lord allows hardship to come into our lives. Whether we are at fault or not, the times of hardship and trouble help us focus on the Lord and learn from Him. Psalm 34 is a testament to all that David learned in this crisis. He would depend on the Lord and take refuge in Him (Ps. 34:8).

**11. How do David's lies affect others in the next chapter? (1 Samuel 22:17 *Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.")***

David may have escaped with his life, but others died because of David's actions. There is no evidence that Ahimelech had committed any crime. He and his whole household are killed for knowing David had fled and not reporting it to Saul. Doeg informed King Saul that David had been with the priests of Nob. Saul demanded answers and was not satisfied with the replies that he was given. Eighty-five priests would die because David had come to them for bread. Perhaps it would have been different if David had not lied to the High Priest. Sadly, David's actions brought deadly consequences for the innocent priests. David admits his responsibility for the massacre (1 Sam 22:22) and protects the one priest who escaped.

**12. How are the innocent affected by our sins when we forget to rely on God? Why does sin have such far-reaching consequences?**

Often, the children suffer the greatest when parents get a divorce. Friends or coworkers often suffer the most for our actions or lies at work or in life. When we stray from God's ways, some consequences impact others who are near us as well as us. We expect that we will escape unharmed from our sins, but the power of sin is great and can lead us and those near us down a slippery slope. The priests were innocent, and those around us are often innocent as well. Therefore, it is essential to flee sin when tempted and confess sin when we fail so that the Lord can help us through the consequences. Psalm 56 is a powerful psalm seeking the Lord's help. David shares how the Lord has helped him grow in faith in this psalm. As we turn to the Lord, He will provide answers and help us put our lives back together when things go wrong.

**13. What did you learn from this event in David's life? What are the proper actions when we face desperate times in life?**

One wonders what the scene would have looked like if David had prayed the prayers of Psalms 34 and 56 when he was at the Tabernacle instead of when he was in Gath. When we have troubles, the first thing we need to do is to go to the Lord in prayer. We will want his help and answers amid troubles. The second thing I see from David is that we need to learn to have patience and wait for God's answers. In David's case, he would have to wait ten years for God's promise of kingship to be fulfilled. Sometimes, there are things that the Lord will need to teach us before we are ready. We need to live with God's character and values through that time. We don't want to let sin bring additional troubles into our lives. Our first steps are important. We can choose to follow and trust the Lord from the beginning, or we can cause ourselves a lot of pain before we find God's path. Troubles will come and go. We need to let the Lord help us through them, grow in life, and be prepared for the Lord's course for our lives.

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1: What do you find most helpful in troubling times when you visit the Lord in prayer, Bible study, or worship?

Deep 2: How well do you deal with fear, worry, and the temptation to defend yourself in a crisis? How do they influence your actions, both good and evil?

Deep 3 Read Psalm 56. How does he move from fear to trust? How could his words help you as you face trying times?

**5. Doing what is right**

**1 Samuel 24: 1-22**

**Big idea: Trials from God create righteousness**

Trials and temptations are regular occurrences in life. No one likes them, but in God's hands, they can have value. David has been hiding safely in a region along the Dead Sea. Saul hates David so much that he tracks him down and then makes a fatal error. He leaves himself exposed to David and his men. His followers want David to kill their enemy and end the suffering. David cuts off the corner of Saul's robe and then feels guilt for violating God's king. His conscience kicks in, and he realizes that killing Saul would make David just like the wicked king. He must confess what He has done and publically tell everyone that he trusts the Lord rather than taking matters into his own hands. His words impact Saul and all the others present. Saul admits that David is more righteous and will one day become king in his place. David has won the day not by taking his enemy's life but by being the righteous child of God who trusts the Lord and lives in faith. He has learned a valuable lesson he will carry with him for the rest of his life.

Most people would desire an easy life, but we learn through temptations and trials, just as David did. A project fails at work, and it would be easy to blame others instead of admitting our faults. A clerk gives you too much money in change, so you take the extra five dollars instead of correcting the error. Temptations can erode our character or lead us to do what can be challenging and make doing the right thing a habit. Instead of just passively doing what is wrong, we take the initiative and follow the values of our God. We trust Him to help us rather than take advantage of every sinful opportunity that comes our way. We know sin has a cost, so we want to do what is right, trusting that the Lord will protect us and provide what we need. The temptation and trials forced us to stop and think. It forced us to make Godly living our default instead of giving into sin. Both actions have consequences. Sins can lead to painful consequences and penalties. Godly living can help us avoid punishment and win the trust and admiration of others.

Little by little, God makes a saint. He took the child that David was when he was anointed and forged a man who would be fit to be king. God was using the trials and temptations to force David to think about what was right and what would cause him and others only harm. To kill Saul would have made David as evil as Saul had become and weakened the trust that others might have in him as a leader. God wants us to be moral people who do not cause our destruction but live in His blessings as they obey His commands. To get us to be that kind of person, God teaches us. He lets us be in awkward positions where we learn to do what is right. He helps us gain confidence in God's ability to help and protect us when life becomes difficult. We may not always enjoy such trials, but God can use them to our benefit. He teaches us His values and shows us why trusting and following Him is important. He never gives us more than we can handle, but He will provide us with what we need to be faithful and strong saints in an imperfect world filled with temptations.

**1. What does the saying "Actions speak louder than words" mean to you?**

The phrase is common and often invoked in our culture. It usually means that a person's actions have more impact than words alone. Talk can be cheap, but taking action can be costly regarding our time and resources. Actions can be meaningful. Someone is grateful if you help them or do something to help your cause. Just saying you care may not help, but it can seem empty and cheap. Let the group discuss places in their lives where actions would speak louder than words.

**Read 1 Samuel 24: 1-22**

**2. Verse 4. What temptation does David face? How do his followers justify a flawed decision?**

With his back up against a wall, David can end Saul's pursuit of him and his men. Saul is completely vulnerable, and everyone there knows it. His guard is down, and his soldiers are not nearby. How tempting the destruction of Saul must have been. It has been several years since the days of glory as Saul's general. David and the men who have joined him have had to run and hide from Saul in remote places like En Gedi. To David's men, this must seem like the hand of God, who has given Saul right into the hands of David. They even quote or misquote a prophecy that they have heard. They believe that the prophecy's fulfillment is Saul's death and the end of their persecution.

**3. Verse 4. What temptations do people often face in life? How do they try to justify doing wrong?**

A project fails at work, and everyone looks for someone else to blame to protect themselves. Others pick on your nemesis at work or school, and you can join in and have fun as well. We have temptations to lie, flirt with a coworker or friend, and be jealous of another's success. Satan has so many opportunities to bring us into sin. Others encourage us, and we often feel that we must stand up and defend ourselves or lie to protect ourselves, our job, and our image. It isn't hard to find a justification for any but the most hideous of sins. Many will even try to twist the words of the Lord in scripture to justify themselves, just like the followers of David did. Our motivations are that we are tired of dealing with the situation, want to save ourselves, or that our emotions supersede our logic and values. It can be the beginning of a terrible chain of events or the start of stronger faith and character if we avoid the temptation.

**4. Verse 5. How does David feel after cutting off a corner of Saul's robe? What has he realized about his actions?**

His men wanted David to kill Saul. He couldn't find it in himself to do that and only cut off a piece of Saul's robe. Then, his conscience kicks in. He had wisely not broken the commandment to murder but now realized that Saul was the anointed king of the Lord and that it was wrong before God even to disrespect God's ruler. David had shown disrespect for Saul before his men. He had declared that the kingdom should be his by taking part of Saul's royal robe. Finally, he had taken into his hand the promise of God that he would one day become king. By cutting the robe of Saul, David was showing disrespect for the Lord as well as Saul.

**5. Verse 5. How does God use temptations to teach us about His will for us?**

When we face temptations, God often uses our conscience to help us grow. Even when we sin, it doesn't mean that the situation is over. Our conscience may haunt us for days. It may take a moment or a day to realize what we have done and the implications of our actions. God will use this time to help us see things differently. It is one thing to talk about hatred or jealousy and promise that we will never go against God's will and fall into that sin. It is another thing to sin and learn firsthand how our actions impacted others. Like David, we begin to realize how our sins are sins against God as well as sins against those around us. When we come to the Lord in repentance, He will forgive us and teach us so that the sin is not easily repeated in the future. God helps us understand the consequences of sin so that we grow in faith and learn to do the right action the next time we face a situation like the temptation that Satan used to bring us into sin. 

**6. Verse 8. Having repented, what does David do to make things right? What has David learned?**

He could have stayed in the safety of the cave and let Saul wonder later how a section of his robe was cut off. Instead, David allows Saul to walk away and stands to address the king, confessing what he had done and giving the king the honor he deserves as God's anointed. David will show his men that they must respect the office that God instituted, for Saul was not his equal but God's leader and king. By showing himself and bowing low, he trusted God, for Saul or one of his archers could have easily put David to death. His call was for reconciliation, and his actions of cutting the coat and not killing the king showed that David has incredible character and has no desire to harm Saul as Saul has been trying to kill David. He even calls Saul "father" as a term of endearment and loyalty. David has learned that this is not a battle between David and Saul. God is in control, and honoring Saul is honoring God.

**7. Verse 8. Why are actions as well as words necessary to make things right?**

Just saying you are sorry is not enough. First, confess to the Lord that you have done wrong and ask for forgiveness. The second thing you have to do is to make things right. You may have to go and ask forgiveness of someone you hurt. You may have to clean up the mess you made in someone else's life. Yes, those actions will have consequences, which may hurt. There will also be freedom. You will not have to worry about the person you hurt finding out later or having others think badly about you behind your back because they know what you have done. You bring it out into the open and trust the Lord to help you rebuild someone else's life and your reputation. Hiding in "the cave" will not allow you or others to learn from this situation and may cause trouble down the road. Doing what is right will make you stronger in your faith and impact those around you as a person of greater morals for the future.

**8. Verse 12. How does David express his faith in God? Why is such faith necessary for David's success?**

With the piece of Saul's robe in his hand, David asks the Lord to judge between his actions of Saul and his behavior. David exposed the evil of Saul and his counselors as they hunted David down as an enemy of the state. On the other hand, David could not kill Saul when he had the chance. He calls upon the Lord to protect him and calls on Saul to obey the Lord before it is too late. The words show how David still cares about Saul and the nation. The situation between the two of them doesn't have to end badly. There can be a simple and friendly transition between Saul's kingdom and David's. Even Jonathan knew that David would be king (1 Samuel 23:17) and would gladly have served as David's second in command, although he was the crown prince of Israel. David's trust in the Lord was strong. It would carry him through his many battles and ultimately give him the desire to build a proper temple for the Lord. David knew that he was nothing without the Lord. God gave him the success that he had.

**9. Why is trusting the Lord a better solution than taking things into our own hands?**

We have neither the wisdom nor the resources to accomplish what God can do instantly. He can change the hearts of men and provide just the right words for us to say when confronted with evil. The Lord can provide unlimited resources so that no project that He wants is beyond construction. He also knows how to justly deal with people so that we don't have to get our hands dirty when dealing with evil. God brings justice and not revenge, managing to spare the innocent while punishing the guilty. God wants to bring solutions at times when we want only retaliation. Finally, God has a way to take an enemy and turn them into a saint by changing their heart and letting them see God's truth and love. It was the Holy Spirit who took Saul, the persecutor of the church, and turned him into St. Paul, one of God's greatest missionaries. Like David, we need to let the Lord deal with the situation. He will bring genuine solutions that benefit his people and bring justice, not revenge upon evil.   

**10. Verse 17. What confession does Saul make as a result of David's behavior?**

David will defeat Saul this day with his character and not with the sword. It will be the righteous character of David that puts a sword in the cold heart of Saul for a moment and makes him realize the truth that he has been slow to acknowledge. For a moment, David repents and knows that he can never stop God's punishment pronounced by Samuel (1 Samuel 15:27-28) and the elevation of David as king over his son Jonathan. Sadly, the repentance does not last, and he is soon hunting David again (1 Sam. 26:2). David, for his part, swears not to wipe out Saul's family. He will take over the kingdom only after Saul has fallen in battle. He will even mourn the loss of Jonathan and teach all the men of Judah to lament the loss of Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:17f). David's character will be one of his great strengths as God's king. Even when he sins, he will repent before the Lord and accept the consequences of sin.

**11. Verse 20. What does Saul predict about the future? What is Saul's concern for the future, and why does he have these fears?**

Saul admits that David will be king. He has known that fact for a while (1 Sam. 23:17) but is now sure of it. David's righteous character has shown him why the Lord would choose David over him. Even the unjust know that God will care for His people and seek out the righteous to lead. God's ways will triumph and bring blessings to his people. Saul knows that he has become an enemy of God and that the saintly David has shown Saul's true nature for what it is. Notice that there is a measure of fear in Saul's voice. He has wanted to eradicate David but now asks that David show mercy when he ascends to the throne. David will show himself throughout the rest of 1 Samuel as one that you should not get angry. He is not opposed to killing his enemies, whether they are the fool Nabal (1 Sam. 25) or members of his own family like Joab, whom he wants Solomon to kill (2 Sam. 2:5). There is reason to fear David as a man and as the servant of the Lord. 

**12. What do Saul and David teach us about the value of righteous living?**

Saul's career as a servant of God began well but faced a steady downhill slide as he ignored God and gave in to jealousy and hatred. David was a poor shepherd who continued to rise in stature as he lived according to God's values and honored others the Lord had placed in responsibility. Godly living will have a significant impact on our careers, family, and our future. The wicked may gain in the short term, but most evil people have bitter ends. Sadly, it will be when David forgets the Lord and gives into lust with Bathsheba or pride as he numbers the fighting men that he experiences the greatest difficulties in his life. God's people must live according to His values, which is the path to God's blessings and future. Saul's actions in life will doom his family, including the godly Jonathan. David's walk with the Lord will bless his descendants for hundreds of years. Even the wicked kings of Judah receive grace because of God's relationship with David.

**13. How can temptations and trials make us stronger in faith and life?**

It was God who scheduled the meeting between David and Saul that day. The man who would be king had a lesson to learn. The current king needed to see the value of the righteousness he had thrown away. The truth is that only God can make a saint. God uses temptations and trials to shape His people. Temptations help us understand why God says something is wrong or right by showing us the consequences of what we are doing and building faith by testing and trying our commitment to Him. You may not always enjoy the temptations that the Lord allows to happen in your life, but you will always benefit. Think of it as Divine Training. God may make it difficult, but he will never give us more than we can handle. He uses trials and temptations to help us be strong and have character. I think of what the author of Hebrews said in ***Hebrews 12:10: "Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness."*** This encounter was one of several that made David into the godly man that the Lord wanted as His next king.

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1 What is the Godly way of relating to people that God has put in authority? Why does our culture mock, question, and protest the actions of those in charge?

Deep 2 Think of someone you know with great godly character. How do people respond to their words and their actions? Why do you think they treat them that way?

Deep 3: What would benefit you most if you chose to live a more godly life by God's power and training?

**6. Learning from God’s opportunities**

**1 Sam 26:6-24**

**Big idea: David learned to trust God’s commands and timing.**

What a person does with opportunities determines their path in life. God brought David safely into the camp by putting Saul and his men into a deep sleep. David faces an opportunity and has to judge what to do when his nephew tells him to kill Saul. He remembers the lessons that he just learned with Nabal. He was angry and threatened to kill this wicked man but learned it is God’s task to bring justice, not man’s. God will choose the time and place for Saul’s destruction and David’s vindication. He respects God’s will and wisely leaves Saul’s camp with his spear and a water jug and climbs another hill to speak to Saul. David will use this opportunity to call Saul to repentance. Through a series of questions, he asserts his innocence and offers a prayer that the conflict might end. The opportunity was not a chance to kill Saul but to learn that success will come for David by living with character. The wicked cause their destruction, but God rewards the righteous.

Opportunities come along the journey of life daily. I wish that God would label them as good or bad, but he often uses them to teach us lessons. Opportunities can come from God or Satan. They can lead us to blessings or bring us harm. It is important to know deeply what is right and what is wrong. Hold an opportunity up to the Ten Commandments and the other laws of scripture. Avoid that choice if it calls us to break one of God’s commands. Look as well at how the option fits in God’s timing. Are you mature enough to handle the opportunity you are presented with? Will it harm us or others at this point in life? God will give us His gifts when we are ready. If the opportunity passes and never comes back, it is often because God has something better in mind. Realize that events are frequently put there by God to help you learn. As you look at two choices, God often enables you to see your purpose in life or understand what is best for you and not just good. You learn who you are and what your values are in life by what you turn down as much as what you accept.

If you act with pure motives and judge choices by the values and commands of God, you will be more likely to have success. You will not be caught up in selfish motives but will seek to do whatever will benefit everyone around you. You learn that living by the character of God is the path to a better life. Each choice opens some doors and closes others. God will use the opportunities of life to develop you as a child of God who understands what is right and wrong and dares to live in righteousness. Men like Saul destroy themselves with their sinful selfishness and fears. People like David, who trust the Lord enough to wait for his timing and who live by His commands, will find that they open their lives for the blessings that the Lord wants to give them. Some choices are meant to teach and prepare us for the opportunities the Lord has for us in the future.

**1. What does it take to raise you from a deep sleep? When have you slept through a crashing storm or another terrible noise?**

My wife has commented on how I can sleep through a terrible storm. Safe inside my house, the thunder and lightning don’t seem to bother me. It is a different matter when we are camping in a tent or a pop-up camper. The rain pelts against the canvas, and the wind shakes my surroundings. I wake up and see if I need to do something to protect myself and my camper. The sense of danger, not just the noise, wakes me up. Let the group discuss what will wake you up in the middle of the night and when you are comfortable sleeping through storms and loud sounds.

**Read 1 Sam 26:6-24**

**2. Verse 6 What does David propose in verse 6, and how does God make this opportunity a reality?**

Armed with information about Saul’s location, David and a handful of men came to gather information about Saul and his men. God must have had a hand in this venture, for Saul and his men were sleeping so soundly that David proposed that he and his nephew Abishai penetrate the heart of the camp where Saul and his captain, Abner, were sleeping. The mission shows the boldness and courage of David and his confidence that the Lord was guiding him to this opportunity. His actions let him know if Saul was present and precisely who was with him that day. His question was what to make of the opportunity the Lord had given him.

**3. Verse 6: Opportunities come in life all the time. How do you decide which opportunities to take and which to pass on? What is at stake with every option?**

God will send you opportunities, and so will Satan. The challenge is to decide whether an opportunity will be good or bad for you. Some will make life easier or help you achieve your goals. Those can be gifts from God or temptations from Satan, who can make evil look good. There are also times when you must choose between something good and something better. The challenge with choices is that they often set the course for the rest of your life. Do you take a job in Seattle, far from family? It could mean a lot of money and further promotions. It can also mean that you lose track of your family. Sometimes, choices are just based on your priorities in life. At other times, more is at stake. In this text, David will teach us several keys to evaluating what is good and what is harmful to our future.

**4. Verse 8: What does Abishai urge David to do with this opportunity? What leads David not to follow Abishai’s advice?**

David had passed up the chance to kill Saul at least once before (1 Sam. 24), and Abishai saw this as a chance for David to do what he had failed to do earlier. God was giving David a second chance to do God’s will and end the life of his adversary, who had admitted that his pursuit of David was wrong (1 Sam 24:17f) but had gone back on his word. Abishai even offered to do the killing himself to let David off the hook. David refuses. David had learned a lesson about the evil of vengeance in dealing with Nabal (1 Sam 25). He had almost become as evil as the man who was his enemy. David was sure God would handle Saul and wanted to keep his hands from doing the evil Abishai desired. Killing Saul in battle would be one thing, but killing a defenseless man whom God anointed while he was sleeping would be another. David has a sense of right and wrong that the others do not yet have.

**5. Verse 8: How do you determine whether a choice is right or wrong? What is the first test that must be applied to every opportunity?**

The strongest decisions we make are those we make before temptation strikes. We need to have a strong sense of right and wrong. We can begin by holding up actions to the Ten Commandments. We know from the commandments that it is never right to lie or steal. Any opportunity that requires us to sin or harm others is one that we need to avoid immediately. Their sin doesn’t justify our sin in retribution. One is wise to ask if making a particular choice will hurt those near you. Will a new job or activity adversely affect your time with your family or bring an advance to the detriment of a friend? Such a choice needs to be carefully weighed and possibly turned down. Good decisions bring benefits to others as much as to you.

**6. Verse 10: What does David know that gives him the freedom to wait for vindication? Why does David feel that striking Saul is not pleasing to God?**

David knows that God has anointed him to be Saul’s successor. He has been running from Saul for about seven years by this point. It would be easy to wonder when God’s promise will come true. He also knows that Saul has gone back on what he said in the cave (1 Sam. 24). Yet, he resects God’s and has the patience to wait for God’s justice instead of instilling his own. David respected the office of the king even if he no longer respected the man in that office. David wants to be on the side of God instead of forcing the events and becoming an enemy of God. God will advance his plan and keep his promise in His own time.

**7. Verse 10: How does timing impact whether to accept or decline an opportunity? How does the impact on others affect your choices?**

Once we know that something is right and not wrong, we have to ask ourselves if this is God’s time. We all know that a sixteen-year-old may not be ready for his car and should wait for the right time. There are also times when it is not yet time to advance in our career because we don’t feel we know enough to handle the job or rush to buy a house or new car when we don’t have the money to do so. It may also be important to ask if we are rushing God. Is our desire to have this so great that we are not waiting for the time the Lord wants us to have this blessing? If we take matters into our own hands, we can cause harm to ourselves and others instead of waiting until the right time and letting God give us this gift when we and others around us are truly ready.

**8. Verse 19 What did it turn out that the opportunity from God was all about since it was not to kill Saul?**

One might argue that the opportunity was not about killing Saul but was another chance to speak to Saul and have him repent. David pointedly asks the king to judge David’s life and tell him if he has done anything wrong. David will gladly bring a sacrifice and confess his sins to God so that God might forgive him if he has done wrong. If David, however, was innocent, then those who are telling Saul to pursue David are the ones who are sinning. David offers a prayer that he may not continue to be separated from the worship of the Lord and that this conflict might end. The words of David show again to everyone that Saul deserves punishment from God and that David is the righteous one. It is another step in David’s education and in revealing why the Lord has rejected Saul and will allow David to replace him. The opportunity was for David to learn and not to kill.

**9. When has an opportunity declined been an opportunity to learn and not to change your life?**

For a pastor, every call you don’t take is an opportunity to learn. You begin to see what the Lord wants you to do in life. A few years ago, I had a chance to be the pastor of a church in Little Rock, Arkansas. The church and its people were incredible, and the call had some appealing challenges. As I drove back from visiting them, I began to realize how hard it would be to be that far from my grown children who lived in the area of my current church. I would have a very negative impact on their lives, and so I refused the opportunity. What could have been good for me would have devastated those I love dearly. God taught me an important lesson about what my life and values were. Just because you don’t take the choice given to you doesn’t mean it didn’t have a purpose from God. Take time to think about the choice and see what God is teaching you.

**10. Verse 21: What does Saul say when confronted with his sin and treachery? Why do you think that David did not believe him? Would you have?**

As Saul had done before (1 Sam 24), Saul confesses that he has been a fool and urges David to return and be restored as part of the family. He promises that he will not harm David but will reward David for not taking Saul’s life. David didn’t believe the words that sounded so hollow. David knew Saul better than Saul knew himself. The words may have seemed old and mechanical. They were surely not to be believed. David’s only response was to have a young man come and retrieve Saul’s spear, which would have been a symbol of the king’s authority. He could not even keep the spear that may have been thrown at him several times before (1 Sam 18:11 and 19:10). It belonged to God’s king, and David would receive it or one like it in due time.

**11. Verse 23: What has David learned about righteousness and evil? How do his words define what will happen to David and the fate of Saul?**

God had given David an opportunity, and he had learned from it. He will succeed by being righteous, for the wicked will bring on them their destruction. David acted like the king that God wanted for His people. Saul acted selfishly and as a man of fear. All who were present and those who would hear about this encounter would understand what God wants in a king. David was developing those qualities and would be rewarded by God with protection and victory. God acts with righteousness to those who are righteous. The last words of Saul to David in the bible are in verse 25. Saul affirms the greatness of David’s actions and the certainty of His kingdom. The two parted with Saul, knowing the inevitability of death and destruction for himself and the glory and victory that David would experience because of God’s favor.

**12. How are pure motives and Godly advice essential for deciding what choice to make with opportunities?**

When your motives are pure, you can see things clearly. You know what is right before God and will benefit those around you as well as yourself. You are not caught up in selfish motives but want your actions to benefit everyone around you. Like David, you want to act with character and values no matter how long it takes to receive the benefits that God will give. You know that to act selfishly and sinfully can only bring disaster to yourself. Having assured yourself that this is what God wants, you can confidently go forward. You know that you are on God’s path and that any sacrifices you make will be offset by the great blessings God has in store for you and others around you. Take on the character of God, and more opportunities will come your way.

**13. What steps would you take based on this text to weigh your life opportunities?**

Opportunities come on the journey of life regularly. Every opportunity opens one door and closes another door. You can’t take every opportunity that comes your way. You need to consider each one of them. First, you must weigh them on the scale of God’s values. If anything causes you to sin, throw it away immediately. Nothing good can come of it. Second, ask yourself if this is God’s timing. We fear that it will never come again if we don’t take an opportunity. If it is God’s will, that opportunity or another even better will arrive at the right time. Bad choices are wisely left to fade away. Finally, how will this affect others around you? Ask Godly friends how this option will affect the big picture. Listen to your family and friends who your choices may hurt. Let God speak to you through others who have his wisdom. God will help you make good choices so that you may be blessed by God.

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1: What opportunity have you experienced lately? What draws you to this option or makes it unattractive to you?

Deep 2: How have you shown patience or trust in the Lord as you dealt with choices you have made in life? What areas do you need to work on for the future?

Deep 3: Why do you think Godly motives and character are so important in making choices in life? What happens if the decision is all about you?

**1 David and Goliath**

**1 Samuel 17: 32-52**

**Big idea: Help people see God's glory**

Faith was what separated David from the rest of the army. The Israelite army and King Saul saw themselves too small to fight the giant. David saw that the giant was too small to fight against God. For forty days, Goliath had come into the valley mocking God. He saw the God of the Israelites as small and weak. Goliath's curses on God angered David. This pagan animal didn't know God's greatness and would feel God's anger and His servant's vengeance. When David stood before Goliath, the giant must have been insulted. A teenager with no armor was sent to battle the champion of the Philistines. What Goliath didn't see was the God who stood beside David. He underestimated the power of faith and the desire of David to show the world the greatness of his God. It only took one stone, and the giant was down. Suddenly, the Israelites on the hill stopped shaking with fear. With newfound courage and faith, they chased the Philistines ten miles back to their walled cities and homes. David had shown them and the world how great God was. He knew what God could do; now, the rest of the Israelites and the world around them did, too.

Faith still separates God's servants from those around them. Others remain quiet when the church is criticized, or God is mocked. They take it personally and want to lay low when difficulty arises. They forget that it is God's church and God's world to win. You conquer the world and overcome challenges with prayer and not with meetings. The enemy is stronger than we are. God is stronger than our enemy. We must do ministry with God's power and not our own. We must believe that if God wants this project to succeed, he will give us the needed resources. The world often scorns our God because it sees how little the church trusts God and sadly loves others as much as God. They will come to know God only if we love God and speak His truth. Therefore, every project should lead people to know about our God. We want them to see His love and experience the miracles only He can do. That may seem impossible, but one person's faith can lead others to see and follow the Lord. Our actions will encourage others in ministry and show the world what a great God we have.

Miracles can happen when people believe in God's power and control instead of their abilities and wisdom. David had experienced the strength and protection of God in his own life. He knew what God could do. He desired that everyone there knew God as he did. We often don't think one person or one church can make a difference. Things change when we realize that we walk with and serve God. Even one person can have a considerable impact on their church, its ministries, or even ministries that serve many churches. We must believe in God, listen to His guidance to follow His will for us, and then walk boldly, trusting in His power and protection. Soon, others will follow, and great things can happen in our midst. Others will catch our faith and believe in the Lord for themselves. The world will see what the almighty God can do with its eyes. Follow David and show people how great your God is. Even one person's actions can build the faith of a small army as they experience the heart of God in us. Together, we will do great things in God's name and let the world know how great our God is.

**1. Describe someone who intimidates you.**

**Read 1 Samuel 17: 32-52**

**2. Verse 32. How did Saul respond to the idea of this boy, David, fighting Goliath? What experiences led David to believe God would deliver him?**

**3. Verse 36. What motivated David to challenge Goliath? Why did this mean so much to David?**

**4. Verse 36. How do you respond when the world mocks God or the Christian faith?**

**5. Verse 37. Whose battle is the battle with Goliath? How does David show more faith in the outcome than Saul?**

**6. Verse 37. When facing trouble, where does our strength lie? How do we show we have confidence in God?**

**7. Verse 43. Saul underestimates David. How does Goliath judge David as an opponent?**

**8. Verse 43. In what ways does the world misjudge the church? How can we help them see what they miss?**

**9. Verse 47. What does David hope to prove with a victory? How does David's size enhance God's glory before all the people assembled?**

**10. What should be our goal as we take on Goliath-size tasks in ministry?**

**11. Verse 52. How do David's faith and victory impact the other Israelites? What have they learned about God?**

**12. Sometimes, miracles just need a leader. How can one person's faith lead others to serve the Lord and believe?**

**13. How does the faith of David change the outcome of the battle and give glory to the Lord?**

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1. What is the faith level of your church or small group? Are they down in the battle fighting for the Lord, or are they "shaking in their boots" up in the hills?

Deep 2. Why is it important to focus on God's glory and power rather than our success or strength? How does our focus impact how we act?

Deep 3. How can you let others see what God can do? Why is it important to let the world see the glory and love of God?

**2. Saul's jealousy**

**1 Sam 18:1-11**

**Big idea: Draw close to the Lord and let Him make you His servant**

At one time, Saul loved David (1 Sam 16:21) and treated him as part of the family. Jonathan saw this giant slayer as someone who was his equal and lavished him with gifts of friendship. The character and courage of David drew Jonathan to want to be friends with him and encouraged Saul to send David out with the troops and to make David one of his army generals. That love and devotion changed for Saul when David had success. The people love him, and the army wants to follow his lead in victorious battles. Their songs and admiration of David bring jealousy and anger to Saul. Instead of being pleased that he had another general who could bring victory, Saul was jealous that the wins were not his. As David rises in popularity, Saul becomes suspicious. God has already told Saul that he will be replaced (1 Sam. 15:28). Is David the replacement? The answer becomes apparent as Saul cannot overcome David because God was with him. David had the character of God, and people were drawn to his humility, courage, and care.

Those who have the character of Christ will find success in ministry and draw others to them. God will give them the ability to do miraculous things in life and ministry. Others will be drawn to them because of their compassion and character in the Lord. Sadly, there will always be people who are jealous or do not appreciate what we do. The world looks for faults in those who are kind or generous. They want to find any weaknesses to make themselves look good. Like David, we need to keep doing good and not let ourselves be concerned with those whose pride wants to be the best. In contrast, the world wants to rank people and be jealous of those with more money or appreciation from others. We have our worth in the Lord and will seek to please only him. Like David, we may go through tough times, but the Lord will be with us and help us do the ministry He has in mind for us to do.

What separated David from Saul was simple. Saul sought his glory and was jealous of anyone who threatened his position of honor. David was a Godly man of faith willing to serve others without worrying about his worth or any rise to power. He attracted others because of his faith, character, closeness, and dependence on the Lord. David fought battles so the Lord would be glorified and God's people could have safety and peace. Others praised him, but he knew his success came from the Lord. He was humble because he constantly remembered his humble roots in Bethlehem. God was with David and not with Saul. Success in life and ministry depends on one factor. It depends on our relationship with the Lord. God will make us successful in life and ministry. He will build our character, protect us from harm, and guide our path. It is not your personal wisdom, abilities, or wealth that will determine your fate. It is your closeness to God and your willingness to follow Him. David had a deep relationship with God, making him the man and later king who would impact the nation for good.

**1. What is the Christian way to respond to another's success? Why are people often jealous of success?**

**Read 1 Sam 18:1-11**

**2. Verse 1. How does the passage describe the bond between David and Jonathan? What do you think drew Prince Jonathan to David?**

**3. Verse 1: What draws you to others so that you want them to be your friend?**

**4. Verse 4. How does Jonathan express his friendship with David? What do you think such actions meant?**

**5. Verse 5. Why does Saul promote David, and how do the officers respond to David's leadership? Why was he so popular?**

**6. Verse 5: What does it take to be a leader today that others will follow eagerly?**

**7. Verse 7. What refrain is sung by the women? How has David's success affected the people of Israel?**

**8. Verse 7: What are the dangers of success for us and for those we care about?**

**9. Verse 8. How did Saul respond to David's popularity? What does Saul say he fears, and why will it come true?**

**10. What are the dangers of comparing yourself to someone else? How do such comparisons destroy the church?**

**11. Dig 6 Verse 12. Why would Saul be unable to overcome David in the years to come? Why was the Lord with David and not with Saul?**

**12. In life, what is the key to success? Is it about being the smartest or most talented?**

**13. What separated David from Saul and others? What lesson should we learn from his life?**

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1: How strong is your relationship with God? What could others point to in your life that shows that "The Lord is with you"?

Deep 2: How does your character influence how you deal with others and how you impact the world around you?

Deep 3 As you ask the Lord for a closer relationship with Him, what characteristics of David in the text would you like to have?

**3. David and Jonathan**

**1 Sam 20:1-17**

**Big idea: Find a friend, Be a friend**

The friendship of David and Jonathan began after David defeated Goliath. The crown prince Jonathan gave David his robe and weapons because he saw someone who had the bravery and faith that was rare in Israel. In a time of trouble, the friendship is tested because of Saul's jealousy of David. Jonathan is put in a difficult position because he wants to be loyal to his father and to his friend. David will seek out his friend for answers, and Jonathan will respond with his willingness to test his father, Saul, so that David will know what the future will bring. Both show great love and respect for each other as their friendship is tested. Their actions show the depth of what a friendship under God can be. Their loyalty and trust in each other show what a friendship can be. They commit themselves to each other's protection no matter how the situation plays out in the years ahead.

Like David, we will all have times of crisis in our lives. We will have health concerns and problems with our spouse or kids and need someone to listen and help. A Christian friend is someone you can depend on in ways that other acquaintances will never do. They will listen and sift what we are saying and feeling through the word of God. They will help you find answers even if there is a sacrifice to help you. Their love for you will be based on the love that Christ has given them as much as their bond with you. Such friends will be there through thick and thin, just as Jonathan was for David. They will commit to helping you and being your friend even when such a friendship gets tough. God did not intend for us to be alone. He has given many of us a spouse that we can depend on. He often provides friends of the same sex as well who can serve each other and help us through the bumpy road of life.

We all need to recognize that everyone needs a friend. We need someone who will lift our spirits and help us carry our burdens. Sadly, such friendships are hard to find in this fast-paced and technical era. We have many acquaintances but few friends of the caliber we see in this text. The friendship in this text gives us a model for the relationships we need in life. Fellow Christians offer an advantage to such companionships. They are people we can pray with and share God's value system. They are people who have learned to make sacrifices for others and have God's love in their hearts. Such friendships take time and effort. One must make time for such relationships and sacrifice to help others we care about. The tradeoff is tremendous. We have a person who will help us when life gets rough and who can celebrate with us when joy comes our way. Such friendships can last a lifetime and bring benefits for years to come.

**1. How would you describe a friend? What do you think is necessary for lasting friendships?**

**Read 1 Sam 20:1-17**

**2. Verse 1. When David is afraid, where does he go for answers? How does his perception of the situation differ from Jonathan's?**

**3. Verse 1. In what situations would you seek the advice of a friend? What do you need most in those circumstances?**

**4. Verse 3. What does David see that Jonathan has missed? In what ways is it hard to be honest with his friend?**

**5. Verse 3. Why is honesty important in a friendship? What qualities must temper our honesty as we speak with friends?**

**6. Verse 5. What does David propose as a way to find out the truth? How does this put their friendship on the line?**

**7. Verse 5. What does David's plan say about the cost of friendship? What sacrifices are often necessary to help a friend find answers?**

**8. Verse 12. What does Jonathan promise? How does this put Jonathan in a difficult place as he tries to remain loyal to David?**

**9. How is loyalty a vital part of deep friendships? What does it take to earn that kind of loyalty?**

**10. Verse 14. What promise does Jonathan request from David? How may this be awkward for David if there is a split between Saul and himself?**

**11. Verse 16. What is Jonathan's final promise to David? How does this show the character of their friendship?**

**12. How long will true friendships last? How does faith in the Lord allow those friendships to thrive?**

**13. Based on this text, how would you describe a Godly friendship?**

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1 What advantage do you see in having a friendship like David and Jonathan have in the text?

Deep 2: How good are you at listening when a friend tells you something you don't want to hear?

Deep 3: How do you remain loyal to one friend when others might consider that a betrayal of their friendship?

**4. David at Nob and Gath**

**1 Sam 21:1-15**

**Big idea: Seek out the Lord and live with character**

Even the Lord's anointed must grow in his faith and trust before he is ready to serve as king. David has just learned that Saul wants to kill him. He begins well by seeking the Lord in the city of Nob, where the high priest and the Tabernacle are located. Things quickly turn bad as David lies about his reason for being there. He is afraid and desperately needs food and weapons that he can't obtain in Gibeah because he must stay away from Saul. When David sees one of Saul's servants, he will make things worse by running to the enemy of Israel to be out of Saul's control. His residence in Philistia soon threatens his life. He must pretend to be insane to escape the hands of those who want him killed in the foreign land. David learns to seek and trust the Lord during this time of trouble. Psalm 56 records his plea for mercy when he finds himself in the hands of the Philistines. Psalm 34 records his thanks to the Lord for delivering him out of their hands. He had gone from good to bad to worse, but the Lord mercifully saved him.

It is often the troublesome times of life that also help us grow in our faith. Like David, we may start well, but fear and desperation cause us to seek to save ourselves instead of turning to the Lord for help. We pursue our plans instead of relying on God's ways because we want to escape the pain. We go from one disaster to the next as nothing seems to work. We need to pray as David did in Psalms 34 and 56, and the sooner, the better. We need to seek out the Lord and trust Him to deliver us from the enemies and challenges surrounding us. We need to avoid the sins of lying to protect ourselves or abandoning the Lord as David did by going to Philistia when we find ourselves overwhelmed. It is the Lord alone who can save us. He alone has the wisdom and the power to provide the path for our future and to protect us along the way. It would be nice if we could learn those lessons only by reading the Bible, but we often have to learn them hard. We must be driven to our knees before we pray to Him.

David would be a different man after this event. His heart would be turned to the Lord as witnessed by the over 20 psalms that reflect David's fugitive years in the Bible. He would be the noble David who would not kill Saul when he had the chance and who seeks the Lord for answers when his family is taken at Ziglag. Little by little, David will become the man of God who will lead God's people to seek the Lord's will in life. In the same way, we must come to the Lord first and not last. Ask the Lord for help and direction to know His will for us. Learn as David will to be patient. He will be an exile for ten years before he takes the throne. God will save him during that time and teach him lesson after lesson. Sometimes, there is a reason God makes us wait, and we need to trust Him through the difficult times of life. Through it all, live with Christian character. It is never right to lie or to break the other commandments just to save ourselves. Sin brings harm. Righteousness brings blessings. God has answers for us, and we need to learn to follow him every day of our lives.

**1. How well do you deal with spur-of-the-moment guests? What is your greatest struggle?**

**Read 1 Sam 21:1-15**

**2. Verse 1. Where is David's first stop as he flees King Saul? How does Abimelech greet him when David comes to him?**

**3. Verse 1. What benefits have you experienced when you start with the Lord in difficult times?**

**4. Verse 2. How does David explain the fact that he is alone? What do the words tell you about David's desperation?**

**5. Verse 2. How does Satan lure us into doing wrong things when faced with tough times? What has been the result?**

**6. Verse 5. How does David embellish his tale to reassure the priest and obtain what he needs?**

**7. Verse 10. Where does David go to flee Saul, and why does this turn out to be a mistake?**

**8. Verse 10. Why does one sin or mistake often lead to other bad choices? Why is it so hard to do the right thing?**

**9. Verse 13. How does David fix the problem he created by fleeing Israel with his cleverness?**

**10. What is the wise choice David missed earlier when he hit rock bottom?**

**11. How do David's lies affect others in the next chapter? (1 Samuel 22:17 *Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.")***

**12. How are the innocent affected by our sins when we forget to rely on God? Why does sin have such far-reaching consequences?**

**13. What did you learn from this event in David's life? What are the proper actions when we face desperate times in life?**

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1: What do you find most helpful in troubling times when you visit the Lord in prayer, Bible study, or worship?

Deep 2: How well do you deal with fear, worry, and the temptation to defend yourself in a crisis? How do they influence your actions, both good and evil?

Deep 3 Read Psalm 56. How does he move from fear to trust? How could his words help you as you face trying times?

**5. Doing what is right**

**1 Samuel 24: 1-22**

**Big idea: Trials from God create righteousness**

Trials and temptations are regular occurrences in life. No one likes them, but in God's hands, they can have value. David has been hiding safely in a region along the Dead Sea. Saul hates David so much that he tracks him down and then makes a fatal error. He leaves himself exposed to David and his men. His followers want David to kill their enemy and end the suffering. David cuts off the corner of Saul's robe and then feels guilt for violating God's king. His conscience kicks in, and he realizes that killing Saul would make David just like the wicked king. He must confess what He has done and publically tell everyone that he trusts the Lord rather than taking matters into his own hands. His words impact Saul and all the others present. Saul admits that David is more righteous and will one day become king in his place. David has won the day not by taking his enemy's life but by being the righteous child of God who trusts the Lord and lives in faith. He has learned a valuable lesson he will carry with him for the rest of his life.

Most people would desire an easy life, but we learn through temptations and trials, just as David did. A project fails at work, and it would be easy to blame others instead of admitting our faults. A clerk gives you too much money in change, so you take the extra five dollars instead of correcting the error. Temptations can erode our character or lead us to do what can be challenging and make doing the right thing a habit. Instead of just passively doing what is wrong, we take the initiative and follow the values of our God. We trust Him to help us rather than take advantage of every sinful opportunity that comes our way. We know sin has a cost, so we want to do what is right, trusting that the Lord will protect us and provide what we need. The temptation and trials forced us to stop and think. It forced us to make Godly living our default instead of giving into sin. Both actions have consequences. Sins can lead to painful consequences and penalties. Godly living can help us avoid punishment and win the trust and admiration of others.

Little by little, God makes a saint. He took the child that David was when he was anointed and forged a man who would be fit to be king. God was using the trials and temptations to force David to think about what was right and what would cause him and others only harm. To kill Saul would have made David as evil as Saul had become and weakened the trust that others might have in him as a leader. God wants us to be moral people who do not cause our destruction but live in His blessings as they obey His commands. To get us to be that kind of person, God teaches us. He lets us be in awkward positions where we learn to do what is right. He helps us gain confidence in God's ability to help and protect us when life becomes difficult. We may not always enjoy such trials, but God can use them to our benefit. He teaches us His values and shows us why trusting and following Him is important. He never gives us more than we can handle, but He will provide us with what we need to be faithful and strong saints in an imperfect world filled with temptations.

**1. What does the saying "Actions speak louder than words" mean to you?**

**Read 1 Samuel 24: 1-22**

**2. Verse 4. What temptation does David face? How do his followers justify a flawed decision?**

**3. Verse 4. What temptations do people often face in life? How do they try to justify doing wrong?**

**4. Verse 5. How does David feel after cutting off a corner of Saul's robe? What has he realized about his actions?**

**5. Verse 5. How does God use temptations to teach us about His will for us?**

**6. Verse 8. Having repented, what does David do to make things right? What has David learned?**

**7. Verse 8. Why are actions as well as words necessary to make things right?**

**8. Verse 12. How does David express his faith in God? Why is such faith necessary for David's success?**

**9. Why is trusting the Lord a better solution than taking things into our own hands?**

**10. Verse 17. What confession does Saul make as a result of David's behavior?**

**11. Verse 20. What does Saul predict about the future? What is Saul's concern for the future, and why does he have these fears?**

**12. What do Saul and David teach us about the value of righteous living?**

**13. How can temptations and trials make us stronger in faith and life?**

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1 What is the Godly way of relating to people that God has put in authority? Why does our culture mock, question, and protest the actions of those in charge?

Deep 2 Think of someone you know with great godly character. How do people respond to their words and their actions? Why do you think they treat them that way?

Deep 3: What would benefit you most if you chose to live a more godly life by God's power and training?

**6. Learning from God’s opportunities**

**1 Sam 26:6-24**

**Big idea: David learned to trust God’s commands and timing.**

What a person does with opportunities determines their path in life. God brought David safely into the camp by putting Saul and his men into a deep sleep. David faces an opportunity and has to judge what to do when his nephew tells him to kill Saul. He remembers the lessons that he just learned with Nabal. He was angry and threatened to kill this wicked man but learned it is God’s task to bring justice, not man’s. God will choose the time and place for Saul’s destruction and David’s vindication. He respects God’s will and wisely leaves Saul’s camp with his spear and a water jug and climbs another hill to speak to Saul. David will use this opportunity to call Saul to repentance. Through a series of questions, he asserts his innocence and offers a prayer that the conflict might end. The opportunity was not a chance to kill Saul but to learn that success will come for David by living with character. The wicked cause their destruction, but God rewards the righteous.

Opportunities come along the journey of life daily. I wish that God would label them as good or bad, but he often uses them to teach us lessons. Opportunities can come from God or Satan. They can lead us to blessings or bring us harm. It is important to know deeply what is right and what is wrong. Hold an opportunity up to the Ten Commandments and the other laws of scripture. Avoid that choice if it calls us to break one of God’s commands. Look as well at how the option fits in God’s timing. Are you mature enough to handle the opportunity you are presented with? Will it harm us or others at this point in life? God will give us His gifts when we are ready. If the opportunity passes and never comes back, it is often because God has something better in mind. Realize that events are frequently put there by God to help you learn. As you look at two choices, God often enables you to see your purpose in life or understand what is best for you and not just good. You learn who you are and what your values are in life by what you turn down as much as what you accept.

If you act with pure motives and judge choices by the values and commands of God, you will be more likely to have success. You will not be caught up in selfish motives but will seek to do whatever will benefit everyone around you. You learn that living by the character of God is the path to a better life. Each choice opens some doors and closes others. God will use the opportunities of life to develop you as a child of God who understands what is right and wrong and dares to live in righteousness. Men like Saul destroy themselves with their sinful selfishness and fears. People like David, who trust the Lord enough to wait for his timing and who live by His commands, will find that they open their lives for the blessings that the Lord wants to give them. Some choices are meant to teach and prepare us for the opportunities the Lord has for us in the future.

**1. What does it take to raise you from a deep sleep? When have you slept through a crashing storm or another terrible noise?**

**Read 1 Sam 26:6-24**

**2. Verse 6 What does David propose in verse 6, and how does God make this opportunity a reality?**

**3. Verse 6: Opportunities come in life all the time. How do you decide which opportunities to take and which to pass on? What is at stake with every option?**

**4. Verse 8: What does Abishai urge David to do with this opportunity? What leads David not to follow Abishai’s advice?**

**5. Verse 8: How do you determine whether a choice is right or wrong? What is the first test that must be applied to every opportunity?**

**6. Verse 10: What does David know that gives him the freedom to wait for vindication? Why does David feel that striking Saul is not pleasing to God?**

**7. Verse 10: How does timing impact whether to accept or decline an opportunity? How does the impact on others affect your choices?**

**8. Verse 19 What did it turn out that the opportunity from God was all about since it was not to kill Saul?**

**9. When has an opportunity declined been an opportunity to learn and not to change your life?**

**10. Verse 21: What does Saul say when confronted with his sin and treachery? Why do you think that David did not believe him? Would you have?**

**11. Verse 23: What has David learned about righteousness and evil? How do his words define what will happen to David and the fate of Saul?**

**12. How are pure motives and Godly advice essential for deciding what choice to make with opportunities?**

**13. What steps would you take based on this text to weigh your life opportunities?**

**For now or later - taking the next step**

Deep 1: What opportunity have you experienced lately? What draws you to this option or makes it unattractive to you?

Deep 2: How have you shown patience or trust in the Lord as you dealt with choices you have made in life? What areas do you need to work on for the future?

Deep 3: Why do you think Godly motives and character are so important in making choices in life? What happens if the decision is all about you?

**About the author**

Rev. Mark Etter has been a pastor for over forty years and is currently the pastor emeritus of Bethany Lutheran Church in Erlanger, KY. Rev. Etter has published several books of Adult Bible studies and numerous devotions and youth studies with Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis. He has been active in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod as an LWML counselor, evangelism chairman, coach for pastors, and circuit counselor. He and his wife, Joan, have three grown children and four grandchildren.

Did you know?

*Here are seven questions that are answered in this study. The page and question number in this study are given after each question. These questions may be used in your bulletins to get members interested in what they can learn from the lessons.*

1. What motivated David to challenge Goliath? Why did this battle mean so much to David? (Page 6, Question 3)

2. How did David’s faith impact the other Israelites? How can one person today lead others to believe in the Lord? (Page 8, Question 11 &12)

3. What does it take to be a leader today that others will eagerly follow?(Page 10, Question 6)

4. Why is honesty important in a friendship? What qualities must temper our honesty when we speak with friends?(Page 14, Question 5)

5. **Where does David first go to flee Saul, and why does this turn out to be a mistake?**  (Page 19, Question 10)

6. How does God use temptations to teach us about His will for us and help us grow?  (Page 24, Question 5)

7. **How do you determine whether a choice is right or wrong? What is the first test that must be applied to every opportunity?**  (Page 26, Question 5)