

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum -Participant Guide

Introductory Week (Week of Sept 29)— “Get to know each other, and get to know David”

Desired outcome: That we can learn a little about each other and the Old Testament character David.

Big idea: Circles beat rows!

1. Ice Breaker

2. Set-up Small Group

- Do any of the words or phrases listed below describe how you’re thinking or feeling about this new group?
- You’ve heard us say, “Circles beat rows”. Why do you think we say that over and over? What does it mean and how have you seen it to be true?

3. Bible Study: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

List/brainstorm together the advantages of being in a circle with others.

You have a group of people who...

Vs. 10 _____

Vs. 11 _____

Vs. 12 _____

4. Series Overview

Things we know about David:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Things to remember during this 10-week Group

- a. We are here for each other. If you need prayer or encouragement, reach out to me (the leader) or the other members of the group. We hope some friendships that start during these 10 weeks will last a lifetime!
- b. If you can't be here, let us know. We would love to know you are ok and look forward to seeing you next week.
- c. Be there on the weekend, to hear the sermons! And when you aren't physically there, watch them on YouTube. We will discuss the weekend sermons every week and would love to have you be part of this discussion.
- d. If you choose, we have an additional resource coming out this weekend as well! We have created a 40-day daily reading that goes through 8 weeks of the David series. This is a great way to dig deeper outside of this small group.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum

Week 1—“The Anatomy of a Train Wreck”

Desired outcome: That we would learn a good lesson (on obedience) from a bad example (the person of Saul)

Big idea: 90% obedience is 10% short

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 9, 13, 15

1. Have you ever known someone who had great potential, but their life didn't/hasn't amounted to much? For some reason, they haven't come close to living out “their best life”? Describe that person and why (in your opinion) their life has never taken off.

2. Israel's first king was a guy named Saul. His potential was off-the-charts. Quickly look up and answer the following questions:
 - a. 1 Samuel 9:1-2—read and answer, “What did Saul have going for him?”
 - b. 1 Samuel 9:20-21—read and answer, “What other attribute did Saul possess?”
 - c. 1 Samuel 10:24—read and answer, “What does this verse say about Saul?”

3. With all his potential, Saul's life was an utter failure. At each critical moment in his life, he ALMOST obeyed God. As a group, take some time to evaluate 2 of these defining moments in Saul's life...

1 SAMUEL 13. Saul is told by the man of God (Samuel) to wait for 7 days for Samuel to show up and make the appropriate sacrifices to God. Then, God would give them victory over the enemy. What happens?

- a. Read 1 Samuel 13:10-13. What does Saul do? Put it in your own words.
- b. Who does Saul blame for his disobedience?

1 SAMUEL 15. This is really hard for us to understand, but God clearly commands Saul to completely annihilate the enemy Amalekites. The command is to destroy ALL the people and even the livestock.

- a. Read 1 Samuel 15:7-9. What does Saul do?
- b. Read 1 Samuel 15:13-14. Describe what happened...
- c. Answer: Who did Saul blame this time for his disobedience?

4. In the message, Pastor Phil said that “90% obedience is 10% short.” How does that fit Saul? As you look at YOUR life, does it fit you at all? Is there an area of your life that you struggle to completely obey God in? Without going into great detail, share your answer with the group (if you feel comfortable).

5. The 10% disobedience (that area of our life that we haven’t fully surrendered to God) is what destroys our potential. It slowly sets us off course. It keeps us from experiencing God’s blessing. What’s your “take-home” from today’s lesson...and how can the group pray for you?

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum
Week 2—“What Matters Most (to God)”
Leader’s Guide

Desired outcome: That we would begin to see our hearts as God sees them (worthy of diligently guarding and watching over).

Big idea: When God has our hearts, He has us.

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 16; Proverbs 4:23

1. How does our culture “measure” people? What’s important? Who wins elections? Who gets their picture on the magazine covers of People or Time or Forbes?
2. In comparison, how does GOD measure a person? What matters to God? Look up and read Acts 13:22. David is often called “the King of hearts” because he was the “man after God’s own heart.” What does that mean?
3. As we saw last week, Saul’s heart was undevoted. Saul “almost” obeyed God, and as a result was rejected as king over Israel. It was now time for a NEW king...someone with a better heart. Samuel, God’s man, was given this assignment—go find my NEW king from among Jesse’s sons.
 - a. Read 1 Samuel 16:6. Why do you think Samuel made this snap judgment?
 - b. Read 1 Samuel 16:7-10. Describe the vibe. What’s going on here?
 - c. Read 1 Samuel 16:11. Visualize this scene—what’s funny about it?
 - d. Read 1 Samuel 16:11-13. What do you think David’s brothers were thinking in this moment? What do you think David was thinking?
4. Re-read 1 Samuel 16:7 (the second half). The key phrase: “the Lord looks at the heart.” How do you feel knowing that God is looking at YOUR heart right now?
5. As you look into your heart (the inner you...the you at the core of your being...the you that is hidden to others), what do you see? Describe the condition of your heart...
 - a. Which of the following words best describes your heart right now:
Divided (split in loyalty...pulled in a few different directions)
Distracted (preoccupied, sidetracked, unfocused)
Dirty (a bit polluted by the world, soiled by sins like bitterness or greed or lust)
Devoted (committed to God, dedicated to God)
 - b. Why did you choose your word?

6. Read Proverbs 4:23. What does that mean and how can you do a better job at it?

7. IF time permits, slowly read aloud a few of David's "psalms" he wrote about the heart.
 - a. Psalm 51:1-10
 - b. Psalm 42:1-8
 - c. Psalm 139:1-18

8. Close in prayer, incorporating some of the language in the Psalms if possible.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum
Week 3—“A David and Goliath Story”
Participant’s Guide

Desired outcome: With God’s help, courageously take on “the Goliath” in your life.

Big idea: ***Focus on your giants and you stumble...focus on God and your giants tumble.***

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 17

1. When people talk about the David of the Bible, most people talk about his defeat of the giant Goliath. It was his “claim to fame” or “signature win”. As you look at your life, what is YOUR “claim to fame” (yes, we know it won’t be monumental like David’s!).

2. Turn to 1 Samuel 17. The setting: David has yet to be crowned king. He’s just a shepherd boy (middle school aged) delivering lunch to his older brothers on the battlefield. The 2 questions David’s brothers are asking are: 1. What’s for lunch? And, 2. Who’s going to fight Goliath? Ancient warfare said the battle would be fought between 2 fighters—Israel’s best and the Philistine’s best (a guy named Goliath).
 - a. Read vs. 4-7—what do you learn about Goliath?
 - b. Read vs. 8-10—what was Goliath’s tactic?
 - c. Read vs. 11—did the tactic work? How did the Israelites respond?

3. Vs. 16 says that Goliath did his thing (intimidate) for 40 days. The turning point comes in vs. 20 when David shows up with lunch for his brothers on the sidelines of the battlefield.
 - a. Read vs. 23-26. What is David’s initial response to Goliath?
 - b. Read vs. 28-29. Describe what happens next.

4. Goliath was clearly the choice to fight for the Philistines. Going back in our discussion of Saul in Week 1, what do you remember about Saul’s appearance? What are the implications?

5. Saul finally allows David to fight Goliath. David grabs his shepherd’s staff, 5 stones and his sling, and moves onto the battlefield. Read Goliath’s response in vs. 43-44. Now read vs. 34-37 and verses 45-47. What do these verses reveal to us about David?

6. How does the battle end? Read vs. 48-51.

7. As a group, talk about David's perspective vs. everyone else's perspective (the army of Israel). How was David's perspective unique?

8. What are your "giants" (or giant) today? What is intimidating or defeating you? Is it something from your past or something that is in your path today (bills, anxiety, depression, a demanding boss, an addiction, past abuse, _____)?

9. The question of the day: Will I stand on the sidelines in fear, or will I grab some stones and a slingshot and fight (knowing that the Living God is WITH me)? What does that mean for you? David RAN toward Goliath...how might you do that?

10. Close praying for each other as you fight your battle with God's help. Make sure you thank God for giving you what you need to win the battle.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum

Week 4—“Handling the Hard Times” (part 1)

Desired outcome: To see that caves (difficult seasons of life) are challenging to our faith.

Big idea: ***Caves will either develop our character or destroy it.***

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 21-22; Psalm 142:1-4

1. Describe the worst boss you’ve ever worked for (be careful if you’re a staff member at Crossroads!).
2. David’s success (killing Goliath) hasn’t sat well with King Saul. Saul gets infected with jealousy and tries to assassinate David several times (and you thought you had a bad boss!). David finally decides it’s time to flee the palace. His life becomes like a country song—he’s lost his wife, his home, his best friend, and his safety. He ends up in a cave. He’s bummed. Read Psalm 142:1-4 which records David’s state of mind. Put David’s emotions into your own words...
3. If you’ve ever spent time exploring caves, you know that they’re dark and scary. Life can get that way for us. Things happen and we end up somewhere we don’t want to be...a “cave”. In his message, Pastor Phil said that “caves will either develop our character or destroy it”. Look up the following and sum up what David is doing in each passage...
 - a. 1 Samuel 21:1-2.
 - b. 1 Samuel 21:3-6.
 - c. 1 Samuel 21:8-9.
 - d. 1 Samuel 21:10-15.
4. David’s humanity shows in 1 Samuel 21. He cracks under pressure. Can YOU relate? Have you gone through a hard season where you “cracked”...where you were not at your best? Describe.
5. Caves are part of life. Difficulty is par for the course. Look up and read John 16:33 aloud. Describe “life on earth” according to Jesus.
 - a. Do you think some Christians assume that they should be immune to hardship and suffering (after all, WE go to church, give money, etc.)? Do you think that misperception exists? Has anyone ever tried to sell that kind of thinking to you?
 - b. Discuss the following: **Jesus never promised following him would be easy...but he did promise it would be worth it.**

6. Which of the following best describes your life and why?
 - a. I recently came out of a cave (a season of difficulty).
 - b. I am currently in a cave.
 - c. I feel like I'm about to enter into a cave.

7. What lessons have you learned in the cave-like difficult seasons of life?

8. Close by praying for each other—particularly for those in a cave right now.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum
Week 5—“Handling the Hard Times” (part 2)

Desired outcome: To see the “positive side” of problems/cave-time.

Big idea: ***Caves will either develop our character or destroy it.***

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 23-24

1. Which of the following quotes do you like the best?
 - a. When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade.
 - b. When life hands you a lemon, sell it for a pineapple.
 - c. When life hands you a lemon, find someone whose life has given them vodka, and have a party.
 - d. When life hands you a lemon, squirt lemon juice in the eye of someone you don't like.
 - e. When life hands you a lemon _____ (make up your own).

2. Today, we're going to see David make the most of a bad situation. He's still on the run hiding from madman Saul. He's still wondering how in the world he's going to be king someday. Through it all, he does a couple of things RIGHT.

Read 1 Samuel 22:1-2. Describe who ends up in the cave with David...

Do you know anything about these misfits (what they turned into in time)?

The Point: Instead of whining about who ended up in the cave with him (a bunch of losers), David trained them and turned them into winners. What does that tell you about David?

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-3. What's going on here? Describe the scene....

Put yourself in David's sandals—what might you be thinking right now?

Read 1 Samuel 24:4. What were the circumstances (and David's men) saying?

Read 1 Samuel 24:5-7. What did David's conscience tell him? What does this account tell you about David?

3. In the sermon this weekend, the following was said, “A short-cut today leads to long-term pain and regret tomorrow.” Explain that...have you ever lived out that quote (or seen it lived out by someone else)?

4. David didn't get it all right, but he did do some things right throughout his cave time—he made the most of his situation AND he refused to take matters into his own hands.

How can you apply these 2 lessons to your life?

5. The most impressive thing David did during his days of difficulty was simply to hang on tenaciously to God. Look up and read aloud Psalm 57...another song David wrote while he was doing cave-time. What stands out to you in the Psalm/song? Can we, like David, believe vs. 7 when we find ourselves “in the dark”?

6. Close by praying for each other.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum

Week 6—“Dealing with the Difficult People in Your Life”

Desired outcome: Applaud and imitate the Abigails of the world.

Big idea: The best way to settle a score is to allow God to do the avenging.

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 25

1. Describe (no real names, please) the most difficult E.G.R. (“extra grace required”) person you’ve ever had to deal with. What, if anything, did you learn from that experience?

2. David has shown great restraint with Saul. As you remember from last week, David could’ve easily killed Saul. But, he didn’t, believing that God’s timing was best. Now, David is out of the cave and on the march toward the kingship. He and his 400 “mighty men” are nearing the town of Carmel. They’re hungry and they figure that a guy named Nabal owes them some food for watching/guarding his flocks.
 - a. Read 1 Samuel 25:2-3. What do you learn about Nabal?

 - b. How does Nabal respond to David’s respectfully submitted request for food? Read vs. 10-11, keeping in mind that David’s reputation is well known, and his mighty men are...mighty warriors!

 - c. How does David respond to Nabal’s slur? Read and sum up vs. 12-13. Why do you think David responded the way he did (especially in light of what he’s endured)?

Follow up: Have you ever made a snap or ill-advised decision when you were tired and hungry?

- d. Wife Abigail hears about her foolish husband’s antics and springs to action. Sum up what she does in the following verses:

Vs. 18-22 _____

Vs. 23-25 _____

Vs. 26-28 _____

Vs. 29-31 _____

Have you ever met someone like Abigail? Explain....

What part of Abigail's message do you feel made David re-think his rash decision?

3. David thanks Abigail and sends her on her way. Soon after she returned home, hubby heard what she had done, had a stroke, and 10 days later "the Lord struck him, and he died" (vs. 38). Take a guess what David did next? Read vs. 39 to find out!
4. Why do you think this story is preserved in the Bible? What do you think is the KEY LESSON? What did Abigail model for us? What can YOU apply from it as you deal with "the jerks" in your life?
5. Read Romans 12:17-21. What do you like and dislike about those verses?
6. Close with prayer, particularly those who need to go and work at living out Romans 12:17-21 with someone.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum
Week 7—“Heart Failure”

Desired outcome: That we will see that resisting temptation starts with tuning into reality

Big idea: When we let our guard down, we often fall down

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 11

1. What is your favorite season of the year (winter, spring, summer, fall) and why?

2. What “season of life” are you in right now? Describe it. For example, are you in a season of spring (a time of growth/newness/vitality) or a season of winter (a difficult or challenging time) or _____?

3. As we pick up David’s life, he’s in a season of great prosperity. He’s now a king whose star is rising! Look up and summarize the following:
 - a. 2 Samuel 8:6
 - b. 2 Samuel 8:13
 - c. 2 Samuel 8:15

For the first 10 chapters of 2 Samuel, David can do no wrong. By the time we get to the end of 2 Samuel 10, he led brilliantly for 20 years. Unfortunately, that all changes.

4. Read 2 Samuel 11:1-3. What jumps out at you in these verses?

5. Read 2 Samuel 11:4-5. What happens?

The story continues with David trying to “cover his tracks”. He tries to get Bathsheba’s husband (Uriah) to leave the battle lines and sleep with his wife. He refuses. Finally, David resorts to something unimaginable. Read vs. 14-17.

This is “Bible-hero” David here. How do you reconcile this? What happened to David?

Read vs. 26-27. Summarize what happens in your own words.

It LOOKS LIKE David has covered his sins. But the last line says it all, "But the LORD was displeased with what David had done."

6. Next week we'll look at David's consequences for his sins. Today, our goal is to analyze David's behavior. As a group, brainstorm HOW/WHY this all happened...

What do we know about David? As Pastor Phil said in the message, David's 50 years old, in a season of great prosperity, in a position of power and privilege, and isn't where he's supposed to be. Add it all up, and what do you have?

7. Look up and summarize the following verses:

1 Corinthians 10:12

1 Peter 5:8

Matthew 26:41

James 1:14-16

What's the lesson for YOU from today's study? Share with the group.

8. Close in prayer, praying for God's protection against the temptations and schemes of the enemy...

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Week 8—"A Royal Mess"

Desired outcome: That we will see that sin always has consequences

Big idea: ***Messes don't go away (disappear) if you ignore them (disregard)***

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 13-14

1. Is there a room in your house or a space that you wouldn't want anyone to see?
Describe it!
2. Last week we looked at a chapter in David's life that included him committing both adultery and murder. After sinning, David went to great lengths to cover it up. It didn't work. He finally did come clean and receive God's forgiveness, but the aftermath wasn't pretty.
 - a. Read 2 Samuel 13:1-7. Summarize what's happening...summarize David's response.
 - b. Read the painful-to-read vs. 8-14 and vs. 20.
 - c. Read David's response in vs. 21. Does this response seem lacking to you in any way?
 - d. Read vs. 22. What is brother Absalom's response to what happened to his sister?
3. Years go by. Nothing has been done by David, so Absalom takes matters into his own hands. He comes up with a plan to murder Amnon. It happens. Then Absalom flees home and becomes estranged from David. 3 years later nothing has happened. David defied Saul...David fought and killed Goliath...but now David didn't lift a finger to save his daughter or deal with either of his sons. WHY? As a group brainstorm reasons.
4. Absalom finally comes back to Jerusalem after being on the run. Read 2 Samuel 14:28.
 - a. Describe what's going on inside of Absalom.
 - b. How do you think Absalom feels about his dad?
 - c. Turn to 2 Samuel 15. Does your Bible have a title for this chapter? What is it? Any surprises here?
 - d. This scene goes from bad to worse. It ends with Absalom being killed and David falling apart (read 2 Samuel 18:33).

5. It's easy for us to point a finger at David. He didn't step up as a dad and deal with what needed to be dealt with. Has there been a time in your life where you did something similar? Describe. What was the outcome?

6. As you think today about your family or friendships (or a situation at school or work), is there something that you need to address? Maybe something that you've avoided that's messy?

7. Close in prayer, lifting up those needing to address a difficult situation.

LIFE OF DAVID Small Group Curriculum

Week 9—“When ‘Happily Ever After’ Doesn’t Happen”

Desired outcome: To never lose hope and faith in God even when our dreams don’t come true.

Big idea: It’s not sinlessness that makes us usable to God, but sincerity. David was far from perfect, but he never drifted far from God.

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 15:13-26; Psalm 51:1-17

1. When you were a kid, what did you dream of for your life? What did you want to be and do? Compare that with today’s “reality”.

2. As we’ve studied David’s life, we have seen the **famous side** as well as the **flawed side**.
 - a. Brainstorm David’s famous/noteworthy accomplishments.
 - b. Now, brainstorm David’s flawed/embarrassing endeavors.

Does it surprise you at all that the Bible doesn’t hide David’s flaws? And, does it surprise you at all that David is called (in Acts 13:22) the “man after God’s own heart”?

3. The David of the Bible (not “Sunday School David”) was complicated. His life was full of contradictions (for every Goliath there’s a Bathsheba). He followed God, then fell flat on his face. He stepped out in obedience in a big way, then slipped into sin. And yet, he always ended up on his feet. Can you relate? Is your story like David’s in that respect?

4. David ended up on his feet because he hung on to God. Even when he failed. Even when things didn’t turn out the way he had hoped. For example:
 - a. Look up and read 2 Samuel 15:13-26.
 - b. What stands out in this account? How does David shine?
 - c. Re-read vs. 25-26. How do these verses show David’s confidence in God?

5. Look up and read Psalm 51:1-17. How is this another reason why David recovered from his failures?
 - a. -What do these verses say about David’s heart?
 - b. -What does David teach us about forgiveness and repentance in these verses?

6. When we confess and repent of our sins, God fully forgives us. However, as we've learned from David's life, the consequences remain (the child born to David and Bathsheba died, and David's family fell apart). Respond to the following statements:
 - When you sin, other people get hurt.
 - Every sin comes with a prepackaged consequence.

7. What has been your biggest take-away from our study on David? How can the group pray for you?



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