

I AM



David

STUDY NOTES

Introduction

"Surely someone described as 'a man after God's own heart should be a paragon of virtue, an icon for us to imitate?"

And yet in David, like almost all the Old Testament characters, we find a flawed hero.

Yes, he killed Goliath; waited patiently for God to establish him on the throne; drew strength from God; was a model friend to Jonathan and, much of the time, was a wise king. But David also knew what it was like to give into temptation and to fail.

His adulterous affair with Bathsheba, the murder of her husband and his dismal efforts to preserve family unity were not his greatest moments.

David knew the extremes of human existence – he had enjoyed the best of friendships but endured the bitterest of betrayals when his son and closest advisor conspired to take away his throne. He knew what it was like to live like an animal in the caves and what it was to enjoy luxurious opulence in a magnificent palace.

But despite his personal failings and this mixture of life experiences, the fact remains that God chose to promote this shepherd boy to be the shepherd of his people. God determined that from his line would come the Saviour of the world.

So why did David deserve the epitaph 'A man after God's own heart? What was it that pleased God when he looked at David? Perhaps it was David's overwhelming desire for intimacy with God. He never tried to rob God of power but saw the divine handprint over all of his life and responded with a sensitive, generous heart.

Perhaps what pleased God most of all was that David knew how to repent.

The life of David challenges and inspires us but, more than that, it offers us hope; that we too can know a life-satisfying intimacy with God. We hope that, despite our failings, we too can be men and women after God's own heart." Elizabeth McQuoid

Study 1: What's Special About David?

Welcome:

Share times when you have been aware that you have discerned God telling you to do something and you've done it.

OR discuss: We have a saying in our day: "perception is reality." Explain what this means. Do you agree?

Worship:

As an act of worship stand (if you are able) together and read out Psalm 19. Use it to inspire prayers and songs. If it's appropriate now or at the end of the session pray for any in your group facing specific difficulties or seeking God's will in some matter.

Word:

At the start of this series you may find it helpful to have an overview and to watch together the Bible Project on 1 and 2 Samuel or read an overview here:

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/books-of-samuel/>

Read together 1 Samuel 16.1-13

Why was Samuel mourning for Saul? Why is it mourning and lament an important part of our spiritual lives and often a necessity before we can 'move on'?

Saul's own actions led to his downfall but there were signs of trouble in the heart of Israel even before his reign - what do we learn from 1 Samuel 8?

Looking at the whole bible what can we spot that pleases God when God looks at humans? Why do you think the passage emphasises not looking at appearances whilst also telling us that David was handsome?

·Do you ever attempt to give off a good appearance, even when your heart might not be right before God? Why? Does that mean you should immediately speak out whatever feelings or thoughts you have in your heart? Why or why not? So what is the balance? How can this problem be solved? What are some other Scriptures that deal with these questions?

David's life didn't just start when he became king, 20 years later. The preparation time was all part of God's plan - what can we learn from this?

When David finally became King life didn't get less difficult. What should we learn from this? And even after becoming King there were moments of mundaneness - what are some of the ways God works in our lives even in the normal, ordinary, mundane aspects?

Witness:

Pray together to see others the way God does.

Study 2: Overcoming Giants

Welcome:

Ask everyone to think what has been their 'high light' and 'low light' since you last met. When everyone has had a few minutes to think go around and share them – then out loud all together pray for the person to the left of you.

Worship:

Today we see many 'giants' in our world, in our workplaces, in our society that need overcoming and we will be aware of those facing particular 'giants' in their individual lives. Tonight take some time in quiet to bring the burden of 'giants' before God and close by listening to: In Jesus Name by Katy Nichole

Word:

Read 1 Samuel 17.1-11, 32-50 and 57-58.

When facing 'giants' how can we grow in seeing them from God's perspective? How is David seeing the giant before him, see verse 26 and how does this compare with verse 11?

When facing 'giants' why is it important to remember how God has helped in the past? See verse 37. How good are you at thanking God and remembering the things God has done in your life but also through history?

According to v.28, how does David's brother view David? According to v. 33, how does Saul view David? According to v.42, how does Goliath view David? What do these accounts have in common?

In light of 1 Sam 16:7, what is the lesson we are supposed to learn from God using this "youth?" Do you think churches tend to think of children's and youth ministry as "childcare" while the real ministry takes place in "big church?" Why is this unhealthy? What are practical ways we can guard against this mentality?

One of the reasons the world loves this story is they view it as a story about David looking in the mirror and finding his inner giant and confidence within himself to defeat Goliath. What are some clues from the story that this is not what this story is about? What are some clues from the rest of the Bible that this is not what this story is about? According to vv.46-47, what is this story about?

Instead of identifying with David in finding his inner giant, we are supposed to identify with David in his weakness and humility. Is this a common teaching we find throughout the Bible? Where else do we see this taught (for example, 1 Cor 1:26-31 and 2 Cor 12:9-10)?

What does it look like practically to embrace our weaknesses so that we experience God's power?

How does this story cause us to rethink how we view power? How does the story of Jesus cause us to rethink how we view power? How does the story of David and Goliath ultimately point to Jesus and the resurrection?

Witness:

Let's pray for the alpha course, toddler groups, seniors ministry, the upcoming musical and any other activities we do together as a church that they will reach more people with the love of God and that we'll see many people Welcomed Home!



Study 3: Friendship – a gift!



Welcome:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/loneliness-london>: This research, which estimates that 700,000 Londoners feel lonely 'always' or 'most of the time' presents a fresh wake-up call for everybody invested in the health of Londoners and the health of our communities. What can we be doing individually and together to play our part? How can we help each other to be brave and share when we are feeling lonely and how can we be praying for the growth of friendship in West London?

Worship:

“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me” (Psalm 27:10). Even when those closest to your heart turn away, the God of love will remain with you, safeguard you, and tenderly look after your needs. Spend sometime worshipping God reminding each other that God is with us even when we feel alone in the world.

Word:

Read together 1 Samuel 18.1-11 & 1 Samuel 20.1-24

What makes a good friend?

Looking at the references and what you have read how did David and Jonathan demonstrate friendship: Samuel 19.1-7; Samuel 1.23-27, Samuel 9?

Jonathan was a good soldier (1 Samuel 14.4-14) how could his relationship with David have been different (see 1 Samuel 18.5-9)?

Ian Coffey listed these qualities being present in their friendship: commitment, putting others first, risk, acts of kindness, protection, thinking & speaking well of others, long-term investment, loving when absent as much as when present, not being afraid to show true feelings.

Take some time on your own looking at these qualities and ask God to show you which ones you need to give attention to in your friendships with other people and in your friendship with God. Then come together in smaller groups and if you feel able share something of your thoughts and pray for each other.

What can we apply into our daily lives from Chapter 20?

Jesus calls you his friend (John 15.15) how can you lean into this friendship this week?

Witness:

Pray together for friends and for capacity, love, wisdom & strength to be godly friends to others.

Study 4: Triumphant in Tough Times

Welcome:

So far in studying David's life what is your big take away to hold onto and why?

Worship:

Today use Lectio 365 app and play the daily prayer – encourage everyone to get comfortable and ready to pray before you press play.

Word:

Read 1 Samuel 24.1-22

What do David's friends want him to do?

What does David actually do and how does that show godly leadership?

Why does David feel guilty in verse 5? How does he correct himself and his men? In what ways does he triumph in the passage?

How are we to handle being wronged? What do all these verses add to this passage:

- Romans 12:17-21 – Never avenge yourselves. Leave it to the wrath of God
- Matthew 5:38-39 – Turn the other cheek.
- 1 Peter 3:9 – Do not repay evil for evil.
- Proverbs 24:29 – Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me."
- Leviticus 19:18 – You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge.
- Psalm 1:1 – Do not listen to the counsel of the wicked.

Though we are not to take vengeance – what can be important to do as seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Why is confronting in love sometimes the kindest things we can do for each other as brothers and sisters in Christ?

Without reading ahead in 1 Samuel, what are signs that Saul's sorrow was not true repentance?

David was merciful to Saul and heard his repentance. But notice that he didn't go back home with Saul. Why? What could this teach us about dealing with dangerous or abusive people?

Witness:

Pray for each other in our life spaces – that we will be wise in how we act. That we won't repay evil for evil but rise above in our dealings with others.



Study 5: Wired to Worship



Welcome:

When have you sense you were worshipping God with all your heart?

Worship:

A few people share their favourite worship songs and listen /play a couple and join in together.

Word:

Read 2 Samuel 6.1-23

These passages introduce us to the ark – why was it important? Exodus 25:10-22; Numbers 4:1-20; 7:6-9; 10:25-26. In what way was the ark a symbol of God's presence with His people?

In order to better understand why David must go to retrieve the ark, take some time to review what happened to the ark in 1 Samuel 5:1-7:2. Why are the conditions now right for David to retrieve the ark in order to reinstate the worship of God in Israel?

Why did God strike Uzzah dead? What impression does that make on you? After three months, what did David learn about how to be in the presence of God?

How is Jesus a fulfillment of all that the ark represented?

Look again at David's question in verse 9, which essentially is the question: How can I be in God's presence?

- How does this question help summarize what's taking place in this chapter?
- How is that question answered in this chapter?
- How does the New Testament answer that question? (see for example Hebrews 10:19)

Read Hebrews 12:28-29 and then discuss the following question:

Would you say that you're taking God seriously enough?

How might you lovingly respond to the person who says, "I worship God in my own away. It doesn't matter how one worships God or what you do, as long as it's sincere."

How influenced are you by the opinions of others when it comes to worshipping God? How can we help each other focus more on God's opinion of us? How might David's example help us in this regard?

As you reflect on this chapter, how does it point you to Jesus and help you to love and worship Him?

Witness:

Pray for each other to worship God through our daily lives.

Study 6: The Power of Repentance

Welcome:

'Sorry seems to be the hardest word' sang Elton John. Do you agree?

Worship:

Use the anglican night prayer and say evening prayer together either now or at the end of your study.

Word:

Read 2 Samuel 11.1-9, 14-17 & 2 Samuel 12

Saying 'sorry' is extremely painful and often feels inadequate but repenting to God is so important. God disciplines those he loves and he also is merciful, extends grace and forgives those that repent. The story of the prodigal son shows a Father who does not say 'I told you' or scold but instead embraces. How should God's forgiveness of us shape how we forgive others?

Sleeping with Bathsheba wasn't David's first error of judgement - what series of mistakes did he make?

Nathan helps point out the extent of David's sin to him - we're often reticent to point out other people's failing - usually because we're frightened they might return the compliment! Imagine though how we can be good 'iron sharpening iron' Proverbs 27.17 for one another - precious are the wounds of a true and good friend! If we are to lovingly point out someone's failings to help save them - how should we do that? What did Nathan do?

David went into a spiral of sin - how can we avoid that happening?

In two groups: one group look at Saul's repentance (1 Samuel 15.1-31) and the other look at David's (Psalm 51): What was wrong with Saul's? Why was David's acceptable to God?

What does David teach us about coming back to God after failure (2 Corinthians 7.10)?

What's the value of repentance for us even though we still need to live with the consequences of our sin?

Is there anything that is stopping you from turning back to God and away from failure if there is maybe tonight is the time to ask for some prayer.

Witness:

What ways could you show grace to others this week?



Study 7: Being After God's Own Heart

Welcome:

We've come to the end of the series - it's always worth looking back and asking God to help you to remember any keys lessons learnt, is there anything you'd like to be accountable on with your small group?

Worship:

At the end of our study have a look at the prayer below & discuss it - it's not an easy one to pray but choose in the quiet to either pray it or to ask God to grow your heart to be one that is after is. - A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you, Praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.

Word:

Read 1 Samuel 13 & Acts 13.22-23

- What does it mean to be a man after God's own heart, as Samuel prophesied about Saul's replacement?
- How does chapter 13 illustrate the importance of obedience to God's commands?
- How does the Israelite's fear affect their faith in God and their leader, Saul?
- How might have things turned out differently if Saul had waited for Samuel?
- How can the events in this chapter be applied to leadership roles in today's world?
- Why do you think God tested Saul's patience?
- How does the narrative in this chapter challenge you to examine your faith and obedience to God?

Witness:

Let's pray that many people will come home to God and discover God's restoring love. Pray that as we head towards advent and Christmas that we will all have opportunities to share the good news and that God would use all our services to reach out to people.

