



LIFEgroup Study Guide

July 12 -September 6

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
[www.lbf.church/messages]

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*
danfranklin@lbfchurch.com

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Are You Watching Closely?

Lesson 8 • July 12 • by Bill Mulligan

Main Point

God values the heart more than the outward appearance.

Getting Started

1. What are some indicators the world looks for in a leader?

2. What do you value as evidence of a Godly leader, whether in the church or the world?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we have not covered every passage in detail, and have taken a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. However, this week, since the larger section is the same as the focus

section, we will do a quick recap of Samuel and King Saul's events that lead us to the passage of 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

In chapter 8, as Samuel is getting ready to retire, the people of Israel let it be known that they no longer want Judges guiding them. They would rather have a king like all the nations around them. While Samuel takes this as a rejection of himself, God points out that they have rejected God as their deliverer and king (8:7; 10:19). In a “be careful what you wish for” warning, Samuel clarifies what will be demanded and required of them if they choose a king. Despite the warning, the people still insist on establishing a king for the nation.

In chapters 9 & 10, God reveals to Samuel that Saul is to be crowned king. Saul is described as handsome and tall (9:2) and shows signs of humility (9:21). When Samuel anoints Saul in Chapter 10, the Bible explains that the spirit of God “came upon him and changed his heart” (10:6, 9-10). After defeating the Ammonites in Chapter 11, Saul shows graciousness to those who spoke badly of him when others wanted them punished. Instead, he unites the people and rejoices in the victory that God has given them rather than taking vengeance.

However, in chapter 13-15, it doesn't take long to see Saul's fall from chosen king to rejected king. First, while fighting the Philistines, Saul is commanded to wait for Samuel to offer a sacrifice before a decisive battle. He grows impatient waiting for Samuel and decides to make the offering himself, taking on the role of priest and king. When Samuel arrives, he tells Saul of God's displeasure and that "his kingdom will not endure" (13:13-14). Finally, in Chapter 15, Saul is commanded to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all that belongs to them, including animals (15:3). Saul decides to take the best of what the Amalekites had and keep it for God's sacrifice. When Samuel arrives and sees what Saul has done, he declares, "to obey is better than sacrifice" (15:22) and states that God has rejected him as King. The chapter ends with Samuel and Saul departing ways and says that Samuel does not see Saul again. Samuel is now given the task of finding a new king, one who was a man after God's own heart.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

"The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.'" ²*But Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.'* *The LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'"* ³*Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.* ⁴*Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when*

they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?' ⁵*Samuel replied, 'Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.'* *Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.* ⁶*When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD.'* ⁷*But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'* ⁸*Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The LORD has not chosen this one either.'* ⁹*Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, 'Nor has the LORD chosen this one.'* ¹⁰*Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The LORD has not chosen these.'* ¹¹*So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?'* *'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.'* *Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'* ¹²*So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'* ¹³*So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah."*

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. What do you think Samuel was mourning with regards to Saul (verse 1)?

What does Romans 10:9 tell us what we need to believe in our hearts?

5. How do you think I Samuel 9:2 might explain why God cautions Samuel in verse 7?

6. God can look at the heart, but how can we have that insight in evaluating others?

7. In what ways do you see similarities between David and Jesus in this story?

Applying The Passage

10. Even though both Saul and David were chosen by God to lead others and serve him, what were some areas that both of them faced to cause them to stumble in serving the Lord? What areas are weak points for you in serving the Lord?

11. If you feel God has called you to serve him and minister to others, what are some positive things that have occurred in your life as a result of that calling?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Why do you think God had Samuel and the nation of Israel go through the experience of anointing Saul and not just choose David in the first place?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. In light of verse 7, how did Jesus apply that same truth to his teachings and ministry in the Gospels?



The Giant Slayer

Lesson 9 • July 19 • by Bill Mulligan

Main Point

Battles are won not through our power but through God's power.

Getting Started

1. Share a time in your life when you faced overwhelming obstacles and tried to solve it with your power.

2. What do you think it takes to let God fight our battles?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 16:14-17:58.

The next section of reading ties in the persons of Saul and David and how they interact in each other's lives. Immediately after Samuel has anointed David, we learn that the Spirit of the Lord has departed from Saul and been replaced by an evil spirit that "troubled him." This spirit led to fits of anger and depression. Saul's staff recommended that they seek out someone who was skilled at playing the lyre (harp) and would play it when he became agitated because of the evil spirit. This led to a recommendation of the son of Jesse of Bethlehem, named David. Verse 18 describes David as not only someone who could play the lyre, but also "a brave man and a warrior"..." speaks well...fine-looking... and the LORD is with him." David was sent for and found favor with Saul and became an armor-bearer (v. 21). More importantly, when the evil spirit was upon Saul, David "take up his lyre and play," and Saul "would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him." Chapter 17 introduces a new war brewing between Israel and the Philistines. We are also told in verse 15 that David was going back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. While David is away tending sheep, the Philistines send out their champion Goliath to challenge someone from the camp of Israel. The idea is that whoever loses the fight becomes the slaves of the other. Since it is estimated that Goliath is somewhere over 9 feet tall and heavily armored, no one from Israel is anxious to accept the challenge of one on one combat. This scenario plays out for a total

of 40 days, with no one coming forward from Israel. At this point, David arrives back in camp to bring food to his brothers in the army of Israel. After hearing Goliath defy Israel's armies, David can't believe no one is willing to stand up and "remove this disgrace from Israel...that defies "the armies of the living God (verse 26)." When others overhear David, he is taken to King Saul, where the story unfolds in the focus passage.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 17:32-50.

¹³²David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." ³³Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth." ³⁴But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you." ³⁸Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. ⁴⁰Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five

smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. ⁴¹Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. ⁴²He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. ⁴³He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴"Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!" ⁴⁵David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands." ⁴⁸As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. ⁴⁹Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. ⁵⁰So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him."

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. What was the difference in focus between Saul and David as to David's ability to fight Goliath? (Verses 33-37)

5. In verses 45-47, David "enlightens" Goliath as to the reasons he will be victorious. Name as many reasons as you can find in this passage.

6. Since David represented the whole army of Israel, and if he lost they would become the servants of the Philistines, how do you think Israel's army felt as they watched him walk out to face Goliath? How would knowing David personally ease your apprehension?

7. How would you paraphrase the summary of verse 50?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. David's experience as a shepherd gave him confidence that God would win the battle against Goliath. Read John 10:14-18. What are some of his claims about the "good shepherd" that give us confidence that He will protect us?

Applying The Passage

10. What are some struggles in your life that you have tried to fight on your own and left God out of the equation?

11. What are some practical ways that would encourage you to recognize that God is the one who should be doing the fighting?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Often in this story, David is said to represent us as we fight our "Goliaths" in life. Others see David as more of a Christ-like figure fighting our battles while we watch on the sidelines trusting God to defeat the enemy. How do you see yourself represented in this story?



The Spear and the Lyre

Lesson 10 • July 26 • by Bryan Vander Tuig

Main Point

God alone places and replaces rulers.

Getting Started

1. Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that God places and replaces all rulers? Why?

2. Why do you think God establishes rulers that he knows will not submit to him?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 18:1-19:24.

In 1 Samuel 17, the Israelites had just come off a great military victory, led by David's incredible defeat of Goliath, the Philistine warrior. In Chapter 18, because of his bravery and great triumph, David, a simple shepherd-boy, was brought into the service of King Saul, the proud yet insecure ruler of the Israelites. Almost immediately, Saul became jealous of David's popularity because the people of Israel praised David as a military victor more than they praised Saul, their king. It didn't take long for Saul's jealousy to express itself in an attempt to kill, as he tried to pin David to the wall with his spear while David played the harp. On several occasions, the text says that Saul was "afraid of David because the LORD was with David but had left Saul."

Saul's inability to kill David himself forced him to change tactics: He made David a military commander who would frequently go out to battle against the Philistines. Saul's sole purpose in doing this was to place David in a situation where he would be killed in action. But rather than get David killed as Saul hoped, God protected David and gave him greater success, which made him even more popular with the people of Israel.

Saul's third tactic to kill David was to have him marry his daughter, Michal. On several occasions, David tried to rebuff the King's offer to become his son-in-law

because David saw himself as a simple shepherd-boy from a poor family in Bethlehem, not as someone worthy of being the king's son-in-law. Also, David never believed he would have the ability to pay Saul the cost of marrying his daughter, but when Saul made the bride price a military victory, David agreed. Again, Saul's purpose in negotiating this agreement was to place David in a life-threatening battle with the Philistines to get him killed.

In Chapter 18, we see David, the humble shepherd-boy, exalted by God to the role of a military commander, son-in-law of the king, and famous amongst the people of Israel. God protected David from Saul and prepared him to, one day, be the King of Israel. Simultaneously, Saul, who had everything he could ever want, became more jealous and more enraged, realizing that God was with David and not with him. God was preparing to remove Saul from the throne so that David, a man after God's heart, could ascend to it.

Chapter 19, the primary text for this lesson, continues the theme of God's protection for David, the future king, and God humbling the proud Saul. We will see Jonathan, Saul's son, defend David to his father; Michal, Saul's daughter, helps David escape from Saul's death grip; and God intervenes miraculously to keep Saul from killing David himself.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 19:1-24.

"¹⁹ Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David ² and warned him, 'My father Saul is looking

for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. ³ I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.'" ⁴ Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. ⁵ He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?"

⁶ Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: "As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death." ⁷ So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before. ⁸ Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him. ⁹ But an evil[a] spirit from the Lord came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the lyre, ¹⁰ Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape. ¹¹ Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed." ¹² So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped. Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats' hair at the head. ¹⁴ When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, "He is ill." ¹⁵ Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, "Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him." ¹⁶ But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats' hair. ¹⁷ Saul said to Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?" Michal told him, "He said to me, 'Let me get away. Why should I kill you?'"

¹⁸ When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there. ¹⁹ Word came to Saul: “David is in Naioth at Ramah”; ²⁰ so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came on Saul’s men, and they also prophesied. ²¹ Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied. ²² Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Seku. And he asked, “Where are Samuel and David?” “Over in Naioth at Ramah,” they said. ²³ So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even on him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. ²⁴ He stripped off his garments, and he too prophesied in Samuel’s presence. He lay naked all that day and all that night. This is why people say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Look at verses 1-7. Why was Jonathan willing to risk his life and his inheritance to protect David? (Reference 18:1 as well). What qualities of Jonathan are worth emulating?

5. Review verses 9-10. What do you think it means that “...an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul...”?

What was God accomplishing in doing this?

6. From verses 18-24, how did God protect David from Saul and his men? What does this tell you about God’s character?

7. What does it tell you about how God accomplishes his sovereign plan?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In this passage, God is working in the lives of both Saul and David, in Saul, God has removed His presence from him and in David, he is preparing him to ascend the throne. Do you see evidence of God’s hand in the lives of rulers that you have observed?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. In Matthew 22:21, Jesus said to the leaders of his day, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God, what is God's." How does this connect with this week's lesson that God alone places and replaces rulers?

Applying The Passage

10. Romans 13:1 speaks of the biblical principle that God establishes governing authorities. What specific rulers or authorities can you commit to praying for each day?

11. Christians are called to submit to governing authorities. What are some specific ways that the Church can visibly submit to governing authorities in our present-day circumstances?



The Cost of Friendship

Lesson 11 • August 2 • by Christy Gonet

Main Point

A true friend is faithful to his own hurt.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways you have witnessed people make sacrifices for their friends?
2. In your friendships, do you find yourself more often sacrificing for your friends' good or benefiting from their sacrifices for you?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 20:1-42.

David goes to Jonathan to find out why Saul is trying to kill him, but Jonathan does not believe this is true. Therefore, he and David devise a plan so that Jonathan can know with certainty whether or not Saul is trying to kill David. The plan centers on Jonathan observing how Saul reacts to David's absence at the New Moon Feast.

David and Jonathan put the plan into action, and things go precisely as David suspected. Saul is furious when David is absent from dinner two nights in a row. He tries to convince Jonathan that David is not worthy of his loyalty or protection. He even refuses to call David by name and instead refers to him as the "son of Jesse." Probably part of the reason why Saul referred to David was to emphasize that he is not related to Jonathan by blood. When Saul fails to convince Jonathan that David is an enemy, he becomes so angry with Jonathan that he calls him the "son of a perverse and rebellious woman" and throws his spear at him to try to kill him. This convinces Jonathan that Saul intends to kill David, so he sends him away the next day as planned.

David and Jonathan also make a covenant with one another in this chapter. Jonathan promises to send David away in peace and safety if he determines that Saul plans on killing him. He also invokes God's blessing on David to be with him during his kingship.

as he had been with Saul during his.

By doing this, Jonathan is acknowledging David—and not himself—will be the next king of Israel. David reciprocates by promising not to kill Jonathan or any of his descendants when he becomes king. This is a significant promise for David to make, as any of Jonathan's descendants could challenge his right to rule Israel as king. The two friends demonstrate their faithfulness to one another through making this covenant.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 20:1-17.

"Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, 'What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he is trying to kill me?'" ² *"Never!" Jonathan replied. "You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without letting me know. Why would he hide this from me? It isn't so!"* ³ *But David took an oath and said, "Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death."*

⁴ *Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."* ⁵ *So David said, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon feast, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow."* ⁶ *If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.'* ⁷ *If he says, 'Very well,' then your*

servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me." ⁸ *As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the Lord. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?"* ⁹ *"Never!" Jonathan said. "If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?"* ¹⁰ *David asked, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"* ¹¹ *"Come," Jonathan said, "let's go out into the field." So they went there together.* ¹² *Then Jonathan said to David, "I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know?"* ¹³ *But if my father intends to harm you, may the Lord deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father."* ¹⁴ *But show me unfailing kindness like the Lord's kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed,* ¹⁵ *and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."* ¹⁶ *So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord call David's enemies to account."* ¹⁷ *And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself."*

3. What did you hear that stood out to you? If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Look up 1 Samuel 14:1-14, 1 Samuel 18:1-4, and 1 Samuel 19:1-7. What does each of these passages say about the character of Jonathan?

5. What test do David and Jonathan set up to discover whether or not Saul intends to kill David?

6. Read verses 12-17. What is the foundation of David and Jonathan's loyalty to one another? What enables them to make sacrifices for each other?

7. How are each of the friends faithful to their hurt in this passage?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. In John 15:15, Jesus calls his disciples--and us--his friends. Jesus was faithful to his hurt by living a human life and dying on our behalf. What are some ways that we might be called to be faithful to our hurt for his sake or the sake of other believers?

Applying The Passage

10. What are our responsibilities to our friends?
How much are we called to sacrifice for our friends?

11. What is one way that you can work on being a better friend?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Jonathan could have gone to Saul openly and honestly and asked him if he planned on killing David. Instead, David and Jonathan devised a complicated plan to figure out his true intentions. Does God approve of His children acting deceptively to "accomplish a higher good"?



Deep in a Cave

Lesson 12 • August 9 • by Christy Gonet

Main Point

The faithful trust God as their deliverer.

Getting Started

1. What are some things people need to be delivered from today?

2. Tell of a time when you experienced God deliver you from a problem or bad situation.

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 21:1-24:22.

David's first stop while running away from Saul was the city of Nob. He spoke to the priest Ahimelek and asked him to provide him with both food and a weapon. At first, Ahimelek was wary because David had come alone. David convinced him he was on an urgent mission for the king, so Ahimelek gave him holy bread and Goliath's sword.

David's next stop was to go to the capital of Gath, one of the territories of Philistia. However, when he heard people in the city speaking about his history of waging war against the Philistines, David was afraid the king would view him as a threat and have him imprisoned or killed. He, therefore, pretended to be insane so the king would send him away. David then moved back into the land of Judah to the cave of Adullam. People started gathering to him there and joining with him.

Meanwhile, Saul learned from Doeg the Edomite that the priest Ahimelek had helped David by providing him with food and a sword and inquiring of the Lord. Saul responded by having the priests and inhabitants of Nob killed, including women, children, and livestock. One priest of Ahimelek's family escaped and fled to David. His name was Abiathar.

While David and his men were staying in Adullam, some Philistines attacked a nearby Israelite city. David decided to deliver the Israelites from their attackers.

David was successful, but Saul heard about this and set out toward the city to capture him. David and his men left the city, and Saul pursued them. David had a couple of close calls where Saul's men almost overtook him, but God protected him. 1 Samuel 23:14 says, "Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands."

This sets the stage for the events of chapter 24. Saul is pursuing David, and David is hiding in a cave. And the events that unfold force us to ask difficult questions about safety, revenge, and faith.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-22.

"After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, 'David is in the Desert of En Gedi.'" So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." With these words, David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left

the cave and went his way. Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord, the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'?" This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed.' See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you. "Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? May the Lord be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand." When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family." So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?
If you listened to the sermon on this passage,
feel free also to share something significant that
you heard in the sermon.

4. When Saul comes into the cave, what do David's
men conclude about what God is doing?

5. What stands out to you most about David's speech
in verses 9-15?

6. Why do you think David's speech to Saul had the
effect that it did?

7. What do you think led David to trust that God would
deliver him in some other way than through killing
Saul in the cave?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. David trusted God would decide in his favor in his
dispute with Saul because he knew he had not sinned
against Saul. Does this mean God will not deliver us
from our troubles if the problem we are experiencing
is a result of our sin or if we tried to get out of the
problem on our own in a dishonorable way before
turning to God?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Read Romans 8:31-34. What does this passage
contribute to our understanding of trusting God
for deliverance?

Applying The Passage

10. How can you follow David's example the next time
you are involved in a dispute with someone?

11. What is one thing that you need to hand over to
God and trust Him to care for you?



Avengers Assemble

Lesson 13 • August 16 • by Bryan Vander Tuig

Main Point

The faithful trust God as their avenger.

Getting Started

1. What are some of the ways that we can try to get revenge against others?

2. In what situations do you find yourself most tempted to try to get back at others?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the biggest picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 25:1-26:35.

Back in 1 Samuel 24, David was on the run from King Saul. David was hiding in a cave because Saul wanted to kill him. Saul ended up going into the cave where David was hiding, and David had a golden opportunity to kill Saul. David's men even encouraged him to take out his enemy. But David refused to kill Saul, knowing that God had anointed Saul as king. If Saul were going to be removed from being king, it would not be David who removed him.

Then, in 1 Samuel 26, we get a very similar story. David is still on the run from Saul, and Saul is still trying to kill him. This time David and one of his fighting men walk through Saul's camp, while Saul and his men are sleeping. Once again, David has a golden opportunity to kill Saul, and his friend encourages him to do so. But instead he spares Saul, trusting that God is trustworthy to handle the situation.

But in between these two passages is a story in 1 Samuel 25. In this story, David is tempted to take revenge against someone other than Saul. At the beginning of the chapter, we are introduced to Nabal, a rich and foolish man who owned property and large flocks of sheep and goats. He was also introduced to his wise and beautiful wife, Abigail.

David and his band of men had protected Nabal's vast flocks of sheep while they grazed in the desert, keeping them safe from thieves. David's men also treated Nabal's servants well and never stole anything. During the time of sheep shearing, a festive event, David sends messengers to Nabal to request that he reward David and his men from his flocks for the protection they gave. Instead of responding with kindness and gratitude, Nabal (whose name means Fool) insults David and his men and refuses to provide them with anything. When word gets to David of Nabal's response, David and his men arm themselves and prepare to attack Nabal and his family, seeking vengeance for the wrongs committed against them.

Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants told Abigail of his wicked actions. Abigail immediately prepared a large amount of food, loaded it on donkeys, and began the trek to meet David and his men before they arrived to attack Nabal and his household. She is the last chance to prevent slaughter for her household and to prevent a furious act of revenge from David. Our passage shows how the meeting between David and Abigail unfolds.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 25:20-35.

²⁰ As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, David and his men descended toward her, and she met them. ²¹ David had just said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. ²² May God deal

with David, be it ever so severely if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!" ²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. ²⁵ Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent. ²⁶ And now, my lord, as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you live, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. ²⁷ And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you. ²⁸ "Please forgive your servant's presumption. The LORD your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the LORD's battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live. ²⁹ Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰ When the LORD has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, ³¹ my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant." ³² David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³ May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive

by daybreak.”³⁵ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.””

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. According to verses 21-22, what was David's mindset right before he encountered Abigail?

5. Look closely at Abigail's speech in verses 24-31. Summarize, in one sentence, the message that she communicates to David.

6. In verses 32-33, why is David so happy?

7. This passage comes right between two chapters in which David doesn't take revenge against Saul. In both chapters, David doesn't take revenge because he doesn't believe that it is his place to kill the anointed king. In this passage, however, what is David's motivation for choosing not to take revenge?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. The writers of Scripture continually teach against the idea of revenge. What do you think is the difference between revenge and justice?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. We don't have to take our revenge because God will judge at the end (Romans 12:19). But what about when we want to take revenge against other Christians who have wronged us? Since their sins are forgiven, how does God avenge the wrongs they have committed? What does Romans 5:9-11 say about this?

Applying The Passage

10. Is there a situation in your life that God is calling you to trust him to be your avenger?

11. Can you share a time where you trusted God to vindicate a wrong committed against you, and he did?



A Call from the Dark Side

Lesson 14 • August 23 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God is king over the spiritual realm.

Getting Started

1. What have been some of your experiences with the spiritual realm (examples: the occult, séances, feelings of spiritual oppression)?
2. If you want to hear from God, what are some good ways and bad ways of pursuing this?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 27:1-28:25.

David has been on the run from King Saul for an extended time. Saul wants to kill David because David has the favor of both God and the people of Israel. Saul is jealous and wants to rid himself of this threat to his throne. David, however, has been consistently demonstrating his trust in God instead of trying to kill Saul. Twice (chapters 24 and 26) David spared Saul's life, despite having a golden opportunity to kill him. All the while, Saul delves deeper into jealousy, despair, and madness. God has abandoned him, and he doesn't know what to do.

Meanwhile, David is in hiding among the Philistines, the enemies of Israel. He curries favor with Achish, the Philistine king of Gath. He offers his services to Achish, but when he is told to take his men and attack a city in Israel, he instead attacks an enemy of Israel. He gets away with this for a while, but then Achish tells David that he wants him to join the Philistines in attacking Israel as a full army. The Philistines are bearing down on Israel, and David is in a bind.

As the Philistines are bearing down on Saul and the nation of Israel, we arrive at chapter 28. We see a desperate Saul take desperate action to get spiritual guidance while God has gone silent.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 28:3-25.

¹³ Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. ⁴ The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. ⁵ When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. ⁶ He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. ⁷ Saul then said to his attendants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her.” “There is one in Endor,” they said. ⁸ So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. “Consult a spirit for me,” he said, “and bring up for me the one I name.” ⁹ But the woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?” ¹⁰ Saul swore to her by the LORD, “As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this.” ¹¹ Then the woman asked, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” “Bring up Samuel,” he said. ¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!” ¹³ The king said to her, “Don’t be afraid. What do you see?” The woman said, “I see a ghostly figure coming up out of the earth.” ¹⁴ “What does he look like?” he asked. “An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. ¹⁵ Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” “I am in great distress,” Saul said. “The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what

to do.” ¹⁶ Samuel said, “Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has departed from you and become your enemy?” ¹⁷ The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. ¹⁸ Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today. ¹⁹ The LORD will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.” ²⁰ Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel’s words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all that night. ²¹ When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was greatly shaken, she said, “Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do. ²² Now please listen to your servant and let me give you some food so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way.” ²³ He refused and said, “I will not eat.” But his men joined the woman in urging him, and he listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the couch. ²⁴ The woman had a fattened calf at the house, which she butchered at once. She took some flour, kneaded it and baked bread without yeast. ²⁵ Then she set it before Saul and his men, and they ate. That same night they got up and left.”

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Verses 3-6 give us the background for this story. What are some of the pressures on Saul that are revealed in these verses?

5. Verses 7-10 emphasize strongly that Saul had expelled all the mediums and spiritists from Israel. Why do you think this point is so emphasized?

6. Summarize the message that Saul receives when Samuel appears.

7. Saul was wrong to seek out a medium (read Leviticus 19:31 and Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Why do you think it is so outrageous that God's people seek out someone who practices these kinds of spiritual activities?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. When Samuel arrives, the medium has a strong reaction. Some think that this is because she was a phony, and she was surprised that anyone appeared. Others believe that perhaps Samuel called out Saul's name, and she was alarmed because she thought she had been caught breaking the king's law. Based on the evidence in the passage, why do you think she has such a strong reaction?

9. Saul clearly should not have gone to see a medium, but he did so (in part) because God would not answer him or speak to him. Does this seem unfair to you? What do you think Saul should have done?

Connecting With The Gospel

10. Jesus consistently cast out demons by merely ordering them around. What does this power and victory of his say about how you, as a believer, can think about the spiritual realities of angels and demons?

Applying The Passage

11. Saul didn't hear clearly from God, so he sought out someone else to give him spiritual guidance. Where, other than God, do you sometimes look for advice when you feel stuck? Do you see any dangers in the places you look for guidance?

12. When you do not hear clearly from God, what do you think are healthy ways to continue to pursue him and walk by faith in him?



From the Depths

Lesson 15 • August 30 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God is our source of strength in times of desperation.

Getting Started

1. What kinds of circumstances make you feel like you are at the end of yourself?

2. How do you usually relate to God when you are feeling overwhelmed?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 29:1-30:31.

As he sought to escape from the murderous King Saul, David ended up in an unlikely alliance with the Philistines. He endeared himself to Achish, the King of the Philistine city of Gath. He deceived Achish into thinking that he was willing to fight against Israel, and Achish believed him. But then, in chapter 29, other Philistine officials show their skepticism about David. They think that if they let David come with them to fight Israel, David will betray them and begin to fight on Israel's side. To be fair to the Philistines, this is likely precisely David's plan. Because of the suspicion of the Philistines, Achish sends David away.

When David and his men return to their temporary home in Ziklag, they return to a surprising and devastating reality. The Amalekites have attacked and carried away their possessions, their wives, and their children. God leads David and his men to attack the Amalekites and save their families, but first, we get a powerful scene of how David responds to a desperate moment.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 30:1-8.

"David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and

Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it,² and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.³ When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.⁴ So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.⁵ David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.⁶ David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him,⁸ and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?
If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Read verses 1-3. How do you think you would respond if you experienced the scene that David and his men experienced?

5. What stands out to you about how David and his men respond in verse 4?

6. Verse 6 powerfully says, "But David found strength in the Lord his God." What were some of his other options for where he could have tried to find strength?

7. In verses 7-8, what actions did David take to handle his crisis?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Back in 1 Samuel 15, Saul was told to wipe out the Amalekites. He disobeyed, allowing the Amalekites to remain a threat so that they could raid David's home and create this crisis. What does this say to you about the consequences of the choices we make?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Read Romans 8:31-39. In light of these verses, how are you enabled to respond when circumstances make you feel desperate?

Applying The Passage

10. Name one practical way that you can pursue finding strength in God when you are feeling desperate.

11. Write out a couple of sentences of thanks and praise to God in light of who God is and of the strength he offers.



The Fall of Saul

Lesson 16 • September 6 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God always keeps his promises.

Getting Started

1. Sometimes we experience suffering as the consequences of our own poor choices. When this happens, what do you think is an excellent way to respond?

2. How does it make you feel when you think of God as a judge?

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 31:1-13.

"Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell dead on Mount Gilboa. ² The Philistines were in hot

pursuit of Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua. ³ The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically. ⁴ Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me." But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. ⁵ When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. ⁶ So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day. ⁷ When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them. ⁸ The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. ⁹ They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and they sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among their people. ¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. ¹¹ When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹² all their valiant men marched through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where

they burned them. ¹³ Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.”

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. According to this passage, how does Saul finally die?

5. Read 1 Samuel 28:16-19. How does that prophecy relate to the events in 1 Samuel 31?

6. When the author tells about the end of Saul's story in verses 8-10, what do you think is the intended impact upon us as the readers?

7. Citizens of Jabesh Gilead come into the story in verses 11-13. Read 1 Samuel 11:1-11. How does that passage shed light on the actions of the men from Jabesh Gilead after Saul has died?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Saul had an eventful reign as king. When you think back on it, what do you think are 2 or 3 critical lessons from his life and his time as king?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. God is full of both mercy and judgment. How does Saul's tragic end relate to how you think about God's mercy, which is given through Jesus?

Applying The Passage

10. God keeps his promises, both about salvation and also about judgment. In light of this, how do you think God wants you to respond to the many passages in Scripture about God's judgment?

11. Reading about Saul is an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of someone else. What have you learned from looking at Saul's mistakes?