

MU SYDNEY BIBLE STUDIES

2011



# DAVID

In God's Waiting Room

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design by *Shebnik Designs*

## Suggestions For Using The Studies

1. Make sure that each person has a copy of the study booklet you are using. People have hearing problems and no-one concentrates all the time, so they need a written copy of the questions to take part in the discussions.
2. Copies of the studies can be bought from the MU Office for each person, or you may wish to buy one copy and use your church facilities to photocopy the number you need.
3. If possible it is good to hand out the studies a week or so before the day, so people have time to prepare in advance. If you do this it is wise to have some extra copies available on the day in case some people forget to bring theirs, or extra people join you.
4. It is essential that the leader has fully prepared the study beforehand. You will find that the summary is relevant to the answers of the questions.
5. You may need to choose a selection of questions to discuss if your group has limited time available for discussion. Choose your selection beforehand, don't simply end when you run out of time.
6. Don't waste time reading every Bible passage aloud. The references are included in the booklets so the participants can read them for themselves. Allow time for this where necessary.
7. It is generally better for discussion to sit in a semi-circle than to sit in rows. It is hard to talk to the back of someone's head, and it is generally easier to hear when sitting in semicircles.
8. If you have a large group (twenty or more), consider breaking into smaller groups of about six to ten for the discussion time. The person leading the study could do an introduction, small groups could then discuss the questions with an assigned leader for each group (who has prepared beforehand), and then all could rejoin for a conclusion time directed by the leader.
9. All Bible readings are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of International Bible Society.
10. Note: A Psalm has been printed with every study. You can use this as personal reflection on the theme, or as the Bible Reading if you are having a service before the study. You could also read it for reflection before the study starts if you are not having a service.

## Introduction

If you've been a Christian for any length of time you've almost certainly spent time in God's Waiting Room. In fact, sometimes I think that I spend more time there than out working at a clearly understood and defined task that I know God has given me to do. In another sense we are all in God's Waiting Room, because we are waiting to meet Him face to face as our Father or our Judge.

There are times when I can see what God wants me to do and exactly where it's leading, but other times I continue on because God certainly hasn't stopped what I'm currently doing, but I'm not so sure that it's the best use of my time or energy. I may even have something different I would like to do, but it just isn't working out, so I'm left waiting and wondering if it will ever happen.

There are other times when, because of health problems or other life changes, I find that I can't continue with the things I was doing, and there's no apparent clear way that I can be involved in a new ministry. These are all 'God's Waiting Room times' and it's important to realise that they are not times when God has left us. He is still very much present, even when we can't see what he's doing or why he's allowing us to go through difficulties. Our part is to use these times to focus on God, not on our situation, and to make sure our conduct pleases God in the little things as well as the big issues.

David provides a crucial focus in the Bible, because in David we see God providing a king for His people after they had made a false start with Saul. It's no accident that Jesus is referred to as the 'Son of David' in the New Testament. David was a saviour and king for Israel, but an imperfect one. However he pointed the way to the perfect saviour and king who was still to come: Jesus.

David was in the fortunate position of having a clear call from God. *1 Samuel 16:1-13* tells the story of his selection and anointing by Samuel as the King of Israel. However, there was a problem. Israel already had a king in the person of Saul, and although God told Samuel that he had rejected Saul as king (**1 Samuel 16:1**), God hadn't physically removed Saul and as far as Israel was concerned he was still their king and his son Jonathan would follow him. So David knew where he was supposed to be eventually, but had no idea when or how it would actually happen. Sometimes while he waited he was able to trust God, but other times things seemed to get too much for him and he sank into despair and made choices that didn't include God.

These four studies look at David's relationships and his behaviour, both good and bad, between the time of his anointing and the death of Saul, while he was 'in God's Waiting Room'.

For each study I have chosen one Psalm that I think expresses some of David's feelings at that time. The Psalm could be used as a Bible reading before the study, or people could be directed to the Psalms to read them at the time they are doing the study.

Study 1	Significant to God	<i>Psalm 27</i>
Study 2	When Friends Become Enemies	<i>Psalm 57</i>
Study 3	When Anger Strikes	<i>Psalm 17</i>
Study 4	When the Waiting is Long.	<i>Psalm 34</i>

## History

After the fall, with a few shining exceptions such as Noah, humanity continued a downward spiral away from God. **Genesis 5:5-6** says *"The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain."*

If we are ever tempted to think that God is sitting back and watching us 'from a distance', this passage shows us how humanity's sin affects God, it fills his heart with pain. God's solution to that situation was to come to earth himself to remove our sin. But God's time is not our time, and God had to prepare humanity so we would understand what he had done for us.

God chose Abram, renamed him Abraham, and from him created the nation of Israel. They were to show the world what it was to be a people who were ruled by God and to provide a human line for God himself to come and save.

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, took his family out of the land God had promised, and into Egypt to avoid a famine. There the large family became a great nation who were enslaved by the Egyptians and had to be rescued by God through his servant Moses.

When Moses led them to the border of the Promised Land, all but two men were too afraid of the inhabitants to try and enter, so God decreed they would wander in the desert for forty years, until that generation had died. Finally, after the forty years had passed, the Israelites did enter the land under the leadership of Joshua, but failed to totally remove the existing inhabitants as God had commanded them to do.

The Israelites were influenced by the surrounding nations and embarked on a period when they were ruled at least in part by judges, although **Judges 21:25** sums up the situation in the following way, *'In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.'*

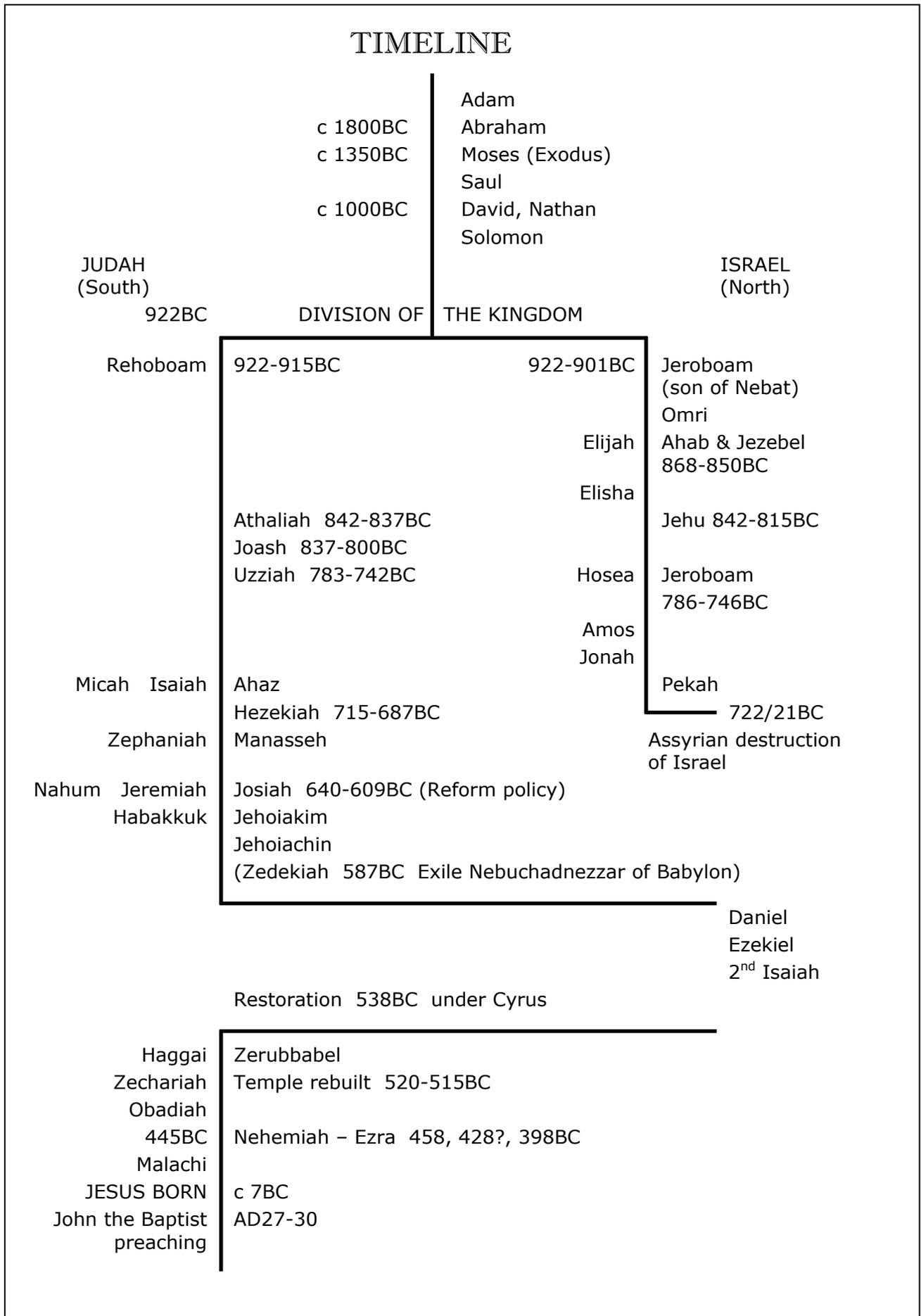
A cycle developed and was repeated over a period of around 350 years:

1. The nation of Israel sinned
2. God sent enemies who attacked and oppressed them
3. The Israelites cried out to God
4. God raised up a judge to rescue them, and they repented

But then as time went on they turned away from God and the cycle began again.

This period finished when the people came to Samuel, the last judge of Israel, and asked him to give them a king *'such as all the other nations have'*. Under God's instruction, Samuel anointed Saul from the tribe of Benjamin as Israel's first king. However, once he was established as king, Saul started to disregard God's commands and do things his own way, so God rejected him as king and sent Samuel to anoint one of Jesse's sons, David, to take Saul's place.

David and his descendants didn't follow God perfectly, but God uses our imperfections, and God entered human history through the line of David. Jesus, a 'son of David', did obey God perfectly and gave himself as a ransom for our sin. Our salvation came through the human lines of Abraham and David. God kept His promises to them, as he always does, and will keep His promise to save all who believe in Him.



## David Study 1 – Significant to God

When we first meet David he is off stage. He’s the youngest son, looking after the sheep, and his father Jesse hasn’t even called him in to meet the prophet Samuel when he visits the family to anoint a new king. David was considered insignificant by his family, but he wasn’t insignificant in God’s eyes.

Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-14 – Samuel Anoints David

<sup>1</sup>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.”

<sup>2</sup>But Samuel said, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.”

The LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup>Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”

<sup>4</sup>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?”

<sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.”

<sup>7</sup>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 man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

<sup>8</sup>Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The LORD has not chosen this one either.” <sup>9</sup>Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup>Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The LORD has not chosen these.” <sup>11</sup>So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered, “but he is tending the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”

<sup>12</sup>So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.”

<sup>13</sup>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 upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

<sup>14</sup>Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

1. What does God tell Samuel to do and why does this need to be done?

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2. What is Samuel looking for in a king?

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**1 Samuel 9:2** describes Saul, the first king of Israel, as ‘*an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites – a head taller than any of the others*’.

3.

a. How may God’s choice of Israel’s first king have influenced Samuel?

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b. We too can be influenced by the way things were done in the past. What else should we take into consideration?

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4. From **1 Samuel 16:1**, what should Samuel have remembered about Saul?

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5. What is God’s criterion when choosing a suitable king?

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We can’t look at people’s hearts the way God does and we know we shouldn’t judge just from appearances.

6. What can we do so we make wise assessments of people?

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7. Who was present when Samuel anointed David as king and what happened to David at that time?

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Appearances continued to be important to the Israelites, especially when the Philistine giant, Goliath, appeared on the scene.

Reading: 1 Samuel 17:4-11,16 – David and Goliath

<sup>4</sup>A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. <sup>5</sup>He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armour of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; <sup>6</sup>on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. <sup>7</sup>His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

<sup>8</sup>Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. <sup>9</sup>If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.” <sup>10</sup>Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” <sup>11</sup>On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

<sup>16</sup> For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.

8. Describe Goliath. Do you think the Israelites had cause to be afraid?

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9. Who were they concentrating on, and what were they overlooking and forgetting?

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10. How can we fall into the same behaviour as the Israelites?

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Look back to **1 Samuel 16:14**.

11. What had happened to the Israelites’ king, and how do you think this influenced the Israelites’ behaviour?

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David’s father sent him to bring supplies to his brothers who were fighting, or rather cowering, with King Saul. David heard Goliath’s taunt and reacted very differently from Saul and his army.

Reading: 1 Samuel 17:32-37 – David and Goliath (continued)

<sup>32</sup>David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

<sup>33</sup>Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.”

<sup>34</sup>But 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, <sup>35</sup>I 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. <sup>36</sup>Your 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. <sup>37</sup>The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.”

12. What is David’s response to Goliath’s challenge? What motivates him?

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13. What does David place his confidence in, and how is that different from Saul?

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14.

a. When we face our own ‘giants’, such as fear, illness, or depression, how can we copy David and not Saul?

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b. How and where do we find security when we face problems?

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Reading: 1 Samuel 17:41-54 – David and Goliath (continued)

<sup>41</sup>Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.

<sup>42</sup>He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.

<sup>43</sup>He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup>“Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”

<sup>45</sup>David 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. <sup>46</sup>This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup>All 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."*

<sup>48</sup>*As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.*

<sup>49</sup>*Reaching 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 facedown on the ground.*

<sup>50</sup>*So 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.*

<sup>51</sup>*David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.*

*When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. <sup>52</sup>Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. <sup>53</sup>When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. <sup>54</sup>David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.*

David's speech in verses 45-47 is the speech of Israel's king.

Look back at **1 Samuel 16 v 13-14**.

15. Why is David and not Saul making this speech?

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God's Spirit had left Saul, but in **John 14:15-18** Jesus promises that he will send His Spirit to those who accept him as Lord and Saviour and that he will never leave them.

#### **John 14:15-18 – Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

<sup>15</sup>*"If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever – <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."*

David's confidence in God is fully justified and he kills Goliath using his shepherd's sling, the weapon he has practised using many times as he protected his sheep.

We also need to practise using the weapons God has given us if we expect to be able to overcome the giants in our lives, such as doubt, loss, stress, sickness, and pain.

David and Goliath presents a picture of us defeating our enemies when we are helpless. God's chosen king defeats the enemies of death and sin. We see this more clearly through Jesus as he defeats sin through his death on the cross.

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18 – The Armour of God

<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

16. Who are we fighting?

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17. Fill in the following table using the Ephesians’ passage.

Column 1 lists the items of armour mentioned. In column 2 write the quality that is linked with the item. For column 3 consider why the quality is linked with that particular item of armour. Finally in Column 4 say why the quality is important. As an example, the first row lists the belt.

Item	Quality	Why chosen	Importance
Belt	truth	A belt encircles and supports, so does truth	Truth provides a solid foundation for our lives and reflects God’s character.
Breastplate			
Feet			
Shield			
Helmet			
Sword			
Prayer			

18. How can we become proficient at using these resources?

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We all face giants; some are with us throughout our lives and others appear as we enter new stages. We can't expect to defeat them using unfamiliar weapons, so we need to ask ourselves do we regularly use our weapons of reading God's word and praying to him or do we wait until we encounter trouble?

God's help won't run out because of frequent use. In fact if we habitually turn to God for help with the little things in our lives, he will be our first response when we encounter big problems, not a 'last resort'.

Just as David looked an unlikely champion, so Jesus doesn't always fulfil people's expectations of a king and is an unlikely champion.

Are we willing to let Jesus do our fighting for us against sin and death?

## Summary: David Study 1 – Significant to God

As the eighth son of Jesse of Bethlehem, David's first mention in the Bible is as a shepherd out minding the sheep, while the rest of the family entertained Samuel, the prophet. Samuel told Jesse that God had chosen one of his sons to be anointed as king to replace Saul, whom God had rejected. David wasn't even considered a possibility until God made it plain to Samuel that none of Jesse's older sons were the man he had chosen. At Samuel's insistence David was called in from the fields and this time God's word to Samuel was '*arise and anoint him, he is the one.*' Saul had been outstanding physically, and Samuel and Jesse were looking at the physical appearance and abilities of the men, but God looked into their hearts and David was chosen. We can also be tempted to judge people on superficial issues such as appearance and financial success, and our society certainly values these things, but we need to look past people's appearance to their actions and attitudes if we want to follow God's values.

Although David was anointed in the presence of his father and brothers, little seemed to change in his life at that time. Then Saul and his army were intimidated by the gigantic Philistine warrior Goliath and Jesse sent David to take supplies to his brothers and to bring back news. When he arrived, David found that there was no fighting being done, just a lot of boastful challenging by Goliath, which none of the Israelites would accept. David saw that Goliath wasn't just challenging the Israelite soldiers, he was challenging the living God as well. So he volunteered to fight Goliath.

Saul and the Israelites were focussing on Goliath with his physical superiority, and they were overwhelmed. David looked at God and knew from past experience, protecting his sheep from lions and bears, that God was able to handle any problem, including Goliath. He took the weapon he was familiar with and addressed the giant with a speech that should have been made by Saul, as king of Israel. But God's spirit had left Saul, and so he was left without resources to lead his army against Goliath. God's spirit had come on David in power at the time of his anointing, and he acted as king and attacked and defeated Goliath. David and Goliath presents a picture of us defeating our enemies when we are helpless. God's chosen king defeats the enemies of death and sin. We see this more clearly through Jesus as he defeats sin through his death on the cross.

As Christians, we have God's spirit in us, but sometimes we take our eyes off God and focus on our problems. God has provided weapons for us with which to fight; truth to encircle and support us, as a belt; righteousness to protect our hearts and integrity, as a breastplate; the gospel of peace for us to take to others; the shield of faith to repel the doubts and fears that Satan sends; the helmet of salvation to protect our minds and steady our thoughts; and the word of God, the Bible, which we can use as the sword of the Spirit to attack and overcome temptation.

However, we won't be able to effectively use these weapons if we never train ourselves to use them. We need to pray and read the Bible regularly, so when any problem comes, big or small, our first response is to turn to God and consider what he wants us to do, not to use God as a fall back when we've tried everything else first.

Psalm 27

Of David.

<p><sup>1</sup> <i>The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?</i></p> <p><sup>2</sup> <i>When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.</i></p> <p><sup>3</sup> <i>Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.</i></p> <p><sup>4</sup> <i>One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.</i></p> <p><sup>5</sup> <i>For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.</i></p> <p><sup>6</sup> <i>Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.</i></p>	<p><sup>7</sup> <i>Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.</i></p> <p><sup>8</sup> <i>My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek.</i></p> <p><sup>9</sup> <i>Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Saviour.</i></p> <p><sup>10</sup> <i>Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.</i></p> <p><sup>11</sup> <i>Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.</i></p> <p><sup>12</sup> <i>Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.</i></p> <p><sup>13</sup> <i>I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.</i></p> <p><sup>14</sup> <i>Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.</i></p>
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## David Study 2 – When Friends Become Enemies

Killing the Philistine giant, Goliath, brought David fame in Israel. His life changed from being the least important member of his father’s household to being a successful military leader and a member of the king’s court. But he was still not the king. However he had done what Israel’s king was supposed to do: fight Israel’s enemies, and in God’s strength, he had won.

Reading: 1 Samuel 18:1-16 – Saul’s Jealousy of David

<sup>1</sup>After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. <sup>2</sup>From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father’s house. <sup>3</sup>And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. <sup>4</sup>Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

<sup>5</sup>Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul’s officers as well.

<sup>6</sup>When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. <sup>7</sup>As they danced, they sang:  
 “Saul has slain his thousands,  
 and David his tens of thousands.”

<sup>8</sup>Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. “They have credited David with tens of thousands,” he thought, “but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?” <sup>9</sup>And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

<sup>10</sup>The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand <sup>11</sup>and he hurled it, saying to himself, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” But David eluded him twice.

<sup>12</sup>Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul. <sup>13</sup>So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. <sup>14</sup>In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. <sup>15</sup>When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. <sup>16</sup>But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.

After killing Goliath, David left his father’s home and stayed with Saul, at Saul’s instigation.

1. How did David perform at Saul’s court and what was Saul’s reaction?

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2. How did the people respond to David and why?

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3. What positive event created jealousy in Saul?

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We sometimes praise a person by comparing their performance to others. The problem with this is it can create pride in the person we’re praising and jealousy in the others.

4. How can we praise someone without bringing in a comparison? What sort of phrases should we avoid using?

The love of people for David, the Lord’s anointed king, prompts us to ask ourselves ‘how much do we love Jesus, our king and saviour?’

Saul’s jealousy of David caused him to send David away to lead military campaigns. However David’s success in these battles only increased his popularity and therefore Saul’s jealousy.

Reading: 1 Samuel 18:12-16, 20-29 – Saul’s Jealousy of David (continued)

*<sup>12</sup>Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul. <sup>13</sup>So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. <sup>14</sup>In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. <sup>15</sup>When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. <sup>16</sup>But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.*

*<sup>20</sup>Now Saul’s daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. <sup>21</sup>“I will give her to him,” he thought, “so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” So Saul said to David, “Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law.”*

*<sup>22</sup>Then Saul ordered his attendants: “Speak to David privately and say, ‘Look, the king is pleased with you, and his attendants all like you; now become his son-in-law.’”*

*<sup>23</sup>They repeated these words to David. But David said, “Do you think it is a small matter to become the king’s son-in-law? I’m only a poor man and little known.”*

*<sup>24</sup> When Saul’s servants told him what David had said, <sup>25</sup>Saul replied, “Say to David, ‘The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.’” Saul’s plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.*

*<sup>26</sup>When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king’s son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed, <sup>27</sup>David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.*

*<sup>28</sup>When Saul realised that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, <sup>29</sup>Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.*

5.  
a. What did Saul realise about David and how did he react to that?

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- b. How could Saul have used the situation positively?

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c. What was Saul’s focus?

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6. How did Saul try to manipulate his daughter Michal’s love for David to get rid of David?

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7. What sad fact is given about Saul’s relationship with David in verse 29?

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People also leave our lives for a variety of reasons. When this happens we can focus on the loss or look for the people God has given us now to support and encourage us

8.

a. Who did God give David to help and support him at this time in his life?

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b. *(Personal, not for group sharing)* Who are your God given supports at this time of your life?

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**1 Samuel 19** marks the end of David’s life as a member of Saul’s court. Although Jonathan managed to negotiate a brief reconciliation (**1 Samuel 19:1-7**), Saul was overcome by an evil spirit from the Lord and once again tried to spear David while he was playing the harp. He then planned to have David killed at his own home, but Michal helped David escape and he ran to Samuel at Ramah.

Jonathan continued to help David and went to him after Saul had tracked Samuel and David down, and David once again had to flee. When Jonathan found out Saul was again planning to kill David, he warned David. Jonathan continued to support David in the best way he could, even to the point of putting his own life in danger.

Reading: 1 Samuel 20:30-34 – David and Jonathan

<sup>30</sup>*Saul’s anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, “You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don’t I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? <sup>31</sup>As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!”*

<sup>32</sup>*“Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” Jonathan asked his father. <sup>33</sup>But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.*

<sup>34</sup>*Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father’s shameful treatment of David.*

9. What reason did Saul give for wanting to kill David?

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10. How is Saul’s madness shown by his next action? What would the result have been if he had succeeded?

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11.

a. What does it appear that David’s journey to kingship will be marked by?

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b. How does this compare to Jesus’ earthly journey to kingship?

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Reading: 1 Samuel 23:15-17 – Saul Pursues David

<sup>15</sup>*While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. <sup>16</sup>And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. <sup>17</sup>“Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this.” <sup>18</sup>The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.*

12. What did Jonathan do when he went out to David in the Desert of Ziph?

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13.

a. What did Jonathan understand about David’s future position?

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b. What position was Jonathan happy to hold?

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c. Why did Jonathan tell David not to be afraid?

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14. Who has God given you to be encouraged by? How is this happening?

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15. Who have you been given to encourage? How are you doing that?

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16. *(For personal consideration)* How much time do you spend with people who encourage you in your Christian faith and how much time with people who aren’t interested in Jesus? Do you need to make any change in the balance?

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Saul tried to retain the kingship for Jonathan, but Jonathan was happy to be second to David.

17. *(For personal consideration)* Is there any situation where you are trying to impose your wishes on a family member or friend?

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18. If we think we know what’s best for someone else, is that sufficient reason to try to make them do things our way? Explain.

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Reading: 1 Samuel 22:1-4 – David at Adullam and Mizpah

<sup>1</sup>David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. <sup>2</sup>All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

<sup>3</sup>From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, “Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?” <sup>4</sup>So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.

Reading: 2 Samuel 23:8-9,11 – David’s Mighty Men

<sup>8</sup>These are the names of David's mighty men:  
 Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.  
<sup>9</sup>Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite.  
<sup>11</sup>Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite.

19. Who came to David at the cave of Adullam?

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20. How are David’s followers described in 2 Samuel 23:8-9,11

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21. What has made the difference to them?

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Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 – The Ministry of Reconciliation

<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

22.  
 a. What has God done for us through Christ?

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- b. Do you really believe he can change entrenched behaviour in people who accept him as Lord and Saviour? Who do you need to give a second chance to?

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23. What does he require of us?

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24. What message does a Christian have for the world? Express **2 Corinthians 5:21** in your own words.

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David’s time waiting to become king brought him allies and enemies. Saul changed from being grateful for David’s service to trying to kill him, to preserve his own family’s hold on the kingship of Israel.

At the same time Michal and Jonathan, Saul’s daughter and son, were David’s strong allies and supporters and both saved his life. God also brought an odd assortment of the distressed, debtors, or discontented to David, but God used the time to mould them into David’s ‘mighty men’ who provided him with battle hardened warriors when he finally became king. Who is helping and supporting you today, and who do you need to help and support?

God is determined to repair the damage done by sin in human life. To do so He creates a people over whom He is King, but He also appoints human leaders to guard, guide, and save them. At this stage in God’s plans He has allowed the people to have a king, but we see the contrast between the false king, chosen by the people, and the true king, chosen by God. The false king has the power and prestige, the true king lives in exile and mixes with unlikely people, and yet he is Israel’s saviour. God is showing us that when the great king comes, a human descendant of David, he will also be rejected by the world, and yet be God’s appointed Saviour.

## Summary: David Study 2 – When Friends Become Enemies

Killing Goliath changed David's life forever. He became part of Saul's court and a successful military leader. At first Saul valued his abilities and David successfully did whatever task he was given. Unfortunately this state didn't last for long. In fact we see the first problems arising as the men were returning home after David's killing of Goliath. The women came out from the towns to greet them, singing '*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.*' Saul heard and became jealous because they credited David with killing more than him. Already Saul was worrying about being able to hold onto the kingdom.

Saul's jealousy was due to his own state of mind, but it was sparked off by the exaggerated praise from the women. It's improbable that either Saul or David had personally killed thousands, let alone ten thousands, but that was not the point. Saul came to see David as a competitor for his people's acclaim, despite David's apparent loyalty, and his jealousy grew from that point onwards.

It's good for us to praise others when they do something well, but let's watch out for two things. Keep praise truthful, wildly over exaggerating what someone has done will either embarrass them, or cause their pride to be stirred up. Also try to avoid comparing the person you're praising to others because again that can create pride in them and jealousy in the others.

As well as being jealous, Saul was actually scared of David because he realised that David's success came because God's spirit was with David, and Saul would have been very aware that God's spirit had left him. His reaction was to send David away from him, to avoid the constant reminder of what things had been like in the past. I wonder what difference it would have made to Saul and his family's future if Saul had repented and kept David close to him, so that he could have had the counsel of God's spirit through David.

Like Saul we don't like our shortcomings being shown up, but if we are wise we will want to take advice from Christians who show the evidence of God's spirit at work in their lives. Sometimes this can mean learning from people who are much younger or much older than us. A person's age isn't important if we hope to be encouraged by them, it is their relationship to God that makes the difference.

Saul tried every method he could to remove David from being a potential successor as king. He abused his own daughter Michal's love for David, by asking a bride price of killing 100 Philistines, in the hope David would be killed. But David and his men killed 200 Philistines. Saul plotted to have David killed at his own house, but with Michal's help David escaped.

When Saul turned against David, Saul's son Jonathan was repeatedly a source of support and encouragement. When David was forced to flee for his life, Jonathan went to him and helped him find strength in the Lord. We will also find there are times when we lose touch with former friends, but when this happens we do well to look around for the people God has put into our lives to help us and support us, as well as looking for the people God wants us to help and support.

While David was hiding from Saul a group formed around him, made up of all those who were in distress, or in debt, or discontented. That doesn't look like a good basis for a support group, but God changed these men to become David's '*mighty men*' as stated in **2 Samuel 23:8**.

There are times when we feel we would be better described as distressed and discontented, than as 'mighty' men or women, however **2 Corinthians 5:17-21** says '*... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come*'. God has made us new people, forgiving our sins and reconciling us to him. In fact in **Romans 8:10-14** the Bible tells us we have the same power in us that raised Jesus from death. He wants us to tell this news to others. Who does God want you to speak to about this wonderful news?

## Psalm 57

Of David. A miktam. When he had fled from Saul into the cave.

[For the director of music. To the tune of “Do Not Destroy.”]

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| <p><sup>1</sup> <i>Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me,<br/>for in you my soul takes refuge.<br/>I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings<br/>until the disaster has passed.</i></p> <p><sup>2</sup> <i>I cry out to God Most High,<br/>to God, who fulfills [his purpose] for me.</i></p> <p><sup>3</sup> <i>He sends from heaven and saves me,<br/>rebuking those who hotly pursue me;<br/>God sends his love and his faithfulness.</i></p> <p><sup>4</sup> <i>I am in the midst of lions;<br/>I lie among ravenous beasts—<br/>men whose teeth are spears and arrows,<br/>whose tongues are sharp swords.</i></p> <p><sup>5</sup> <i>Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;<br/>let your glory be over all the earth.</i></p> <p><sup>6</sup> <i>They spread a net for my feet—<br/>I was bowed down in distress.<br/>They dug a pit in my path—<br/>but they have fallen into it themselves.</i></p> <p><sup>7</sup> <i>My heart is steadfast, O God,<br/>my heart is steadfast;<br/>I will sing and make music.</i></p> <p><sup>8</sup> <i>Awake, my soul!<br/>Awake, harp and lyre!<br/>I will awaken the dawn.</i></p> <p><sup>9</sup> <i>I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations;<br/>I will sing of you among the peoples.</i></p> <p><sup>10</sup> <i>For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;<br/>your faithfulness reaches to the skies.</i></p> <p><sup>11</sup> <i>Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;<br/>let your glory be over all the earth.</i></p> | <p>Selah</p> <p>Selah</p> |
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## David Study 3 – When Anger Strikes

One of the most important things we can learn from **1 Samuel** is the kind of leadership God provides for His people, preparing for the kind of leadership he has provided for us in Jesus.

Twice during the time he was a fugitive, David had the opportunity to kill Saul. (see **1 Samuel 24** and **26** for these accounts). His men urged him on saying that God had given Saul into his hands, but on both occasions David refused.

*“As surely as the LORD lives,” he said, “the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed.”* **1 Samuel 26:10-11**

David’s restraint in refusing to kill Saul is a sharp contrast to his natural response to an enemy. This is shown through the story of David’s dealings with Nabal and his wife Abigail.

Reading: 1 Samuel 25:1-13 – David, Nabal and Abigail

<sup>1</sup>Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah.

Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon. <sup>2</sup>A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. <sup>3</sup>His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.

<sup>4</sup>While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. <sup>5</sup>So he sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. <sup>6</sup>Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’ ”

<sup>7</sup>“ ‘Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. <sup>8</sup>Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favourable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.’ ”

<sup>9</sup>When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited.

<sup>10</sup>Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. <sup>11</sup>Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?”

<sup>12</sup>David’s men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. <sup>13</sup>David said to his men, “Put on your swords!” So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

1. What did David ask of Nabal and why did he feel he could make this request?

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2. What was Nabal’s response? Was that reasonable? Could Nabal have afforded to agree?

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3. How did David react to Nabal’s response? Do you think he was justified? What else could he have done?

David was God’s anointed king. By his behaviour Nabal was scorning, not just David, but the king of God’s choosing.

Reading: 1 Samuel 25:14-35 – David, Nabal and Abigail (continued)

<sup>14</sup>One of the servants told Nabal’s wife Abigail: “David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. <sup>15</sup>Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. <sup>16</sup>Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. <sup>17</sup>Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.”

<sup>18</sup>Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. <sup>19</sup>Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

<sup>20</sup>As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. <sup>21</sup>David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. <sup>22</sup>May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!”

<sup>23</sup>When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. <sup>24</sup>She fell at his feet and said: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. <sup>25</sup>May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.

<sup>26</sup>“Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. <sup>27</sup>And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. <sup>28</sup>Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. <sup>29</sup>Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master 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. <sup>30</sup>When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, <sup>31</sup>my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant.”

<sup>32</sup>David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. <sup>33</sup>May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. <sup>34</sup>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.”

<sup>35</sup>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.”

4. Who did Nabal’s servant take the problem to? Why didn’t he go to his master?

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5. Although it is usually better to take a problem directly to the person causing it, can you think of times when it’s wise for us to go to someone else?

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6. What was Abigail’s reaction to the servant’s news? What other reactions could she have had?

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We see David’s natural response escalating as he stewes over Nabal’s insult while he travels towards Nabal’s home.

7. What had David decided to do by the time Abigail reached him?

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8. How can we avoid brooding on wrongs that have been done to us and consequently overreacting?

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9. How did Abigail approach David? Do you think she was putting herself in danger? Why or why not?

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10. Abigail didn’t try to justify her family’s behaviour or to distance herself from what had happened. How might David have reacted if she had?

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11. Who did Abigail tell David to lay the blame on, why?

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12.

- a. In Abigail’s opinion who prevented David taking personal revenge?

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- b. Saul was attempting to take personal revenge on David at this time. What is Abigail suggesting David do in his conflict with Nabal? How does this contrast with the way Saul is treating David?

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13. What additional promises or prophecies did Abigail make to David? How would this encourage David in his present situation?

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14. What was David’s response and who did he credit with motivating Abigail to act?

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15. What can we learn from Abigail’s approach to dealing with anger in others, and bringing peace to a dispute? Refer to **Proverbs 15:1**, ‘*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*’

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Reading: 1 Samuel 25 v 36 – 44 – David, Nabal and Abigail (continued)

<sup>36</sup>When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. <sup>37</sup>Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. <sup>38</sup>About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

<sup>39</sup>When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.”

Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. <sup>40</sup>His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, “David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.”

<sup>41</sup>She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, “Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master’s servants.” <sup>42</sup>Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David’s messengers and became his wife. <sup>43</sup>David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. <sup>44</sup>But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David’s wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

16. How did Abigail show her wisdom again when she faced telling Nabal what she had done?

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17. How did God avenge Nabal’s wrong against David without David taking any action himself?

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18.

a. In what way could this encourage David in his continuing dealings with Saul? What direction might it point him in?

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b. What should we do when we really want to ‘get back’ at someone who has hurt us or someone we love?

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19. How are both Abigail and David rewarded for their conduct, particularly considering Saul’s action recorded in verse 44?

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Reading: Romans 5:14-19 (Contemporary English Version)

*In some ways Adam is like Christ who came later. <sup>15</sup>But the gift that God was kind enough to give was very different from Adam’s sin. That one sin brought death to many others. Yet in an even greater way, Jesus Christ alone brought God’s gift of kindness to many people.*

*<sup>16</sup>There is a lot of difference between Adam’s sin and God’s gift. That one sin led to punishment. But God’s gift made it possible for us to be acceptable to him, even though we have sinned many times. <sup>17</sup>Death ruled like a king because Adam had sinned. But that cannot compare with what Jesus Christ has done. God has been so kind to us, and he has accepted us because of Jesus. And so we will live and rule like kings.*

*<sup>18</sup>Everyone was going to be punished because Adam sinned. But because of the good thing that Christ has done, God accepts us and gives us the gift of life. <sup>19</sup>Adam disobeyed God and caused many others to be sinners. But Jesus obeyed him and will make many people acceptable to God.*

20. What did Adam’s sin bring to all his descendants? Why?

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21.

a. What did Jesus’ death bring to everyone who accepts him?

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b. Why did he choose to die?

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c. What are some reasons people don’t accept God’s gift? Have you accepted it yourself?

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Just as Abigail turned aside David’s wrath against Nabal and his entire household, Jesus has turned aside God’s wrath from us. Abigail accepted the blame for behaviour she didn’t commit, Jesus took the punishment for sins that weren’t his. What is your response to this great gift of love?

**1 John 4:11** says ‘Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.’

Is there a Nabal in your life? That is, are there people or circumstances which cause you hurt and leave you wanting to hit back?

Reading: James 1:19-21 – Listening and Doing

<sup>19</sup>My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup>for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. <sup>21</sup>Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Will you stop looking at the difficult people in your life and look to God, trusting God to deal with the people or circumstances in His time?

God has forgiven us so much, let us show the world that God’s people are forgiving people too.

### Summary: David Study 3 – When Anger Strikes

David had two opportunities to kill Saul and each time he refused to lay a hand on the Lord's anointed, despite his men telling him that God had delivered Saul into his hands. He chose to wait and let God deal with Saul in His own time, even though that meant David and his men were still being hunted by Saul. This restraint was not David's natural response to an enemy, as the story of Nabal shows us. By nature David was an impulsive, passionate, and hot headed man – features reflected through his psalms.

David and his men had protected the wealthy Nabal's flocks and shepherds and when the shearing time came, David sent ten of his young men to ask for a share of the celebrations. Nabal didn't just reject the request, he insulted David, comparing him to a runaway servant. David armed his men and took a large force to attack Nabal and wipe him out, along with every male in his household.

Nabal's servants realised the danger their master had put his household in, but also knew there was no point in trying to reason with him, so they went to his wife, Abigail, and told her what had happened. We know that it's usually best to discuss a problem directly with the person who caused it, but there are times when this isn't appropriate. When that is the case we need to ask God for wisdom to know who to approach about the problem, and the courage to take action, not to try to ignore the problem.

Abigail acted quickly and went out to meet David, rather than waiting for him to arrive. When she met him she didn't try to excuse her husband's bad behaviour or to distance herself from Nabal, in fact she accepted blame, asking David to hold her responsible as she hadn't seen his men when they arrived. She turned his focus away from Nabal and the wrong he had done to David, and onto God, by praising God for keeping David from shedding blood and already taking revenge. She asked him to accept the gift of supplies she had brought and to allow God to repay Nabal for the insult, so David's conscience wouldn't be burdened by needless bloodshed. Her total confidence in God caused David to reconsider and he praised God and Abigail for preventing him taking revenge himself.

It's easy to brood over things when we have been hurt and to act to hit back, just as David was planning to do. If we take our hurts to God instead, He will quieten our anger and give us healing for the pain. We won't always see Him avenge our insults as He did David's, but we can be comforted to know that God feels our pain and cares about our situation. We can also follow Abigail's example when we are dealing with anger in others, helping them see the consequences to them if they hold onto their hurt and allow brooding to escalate their response to the problem. Proverbs 15:1 says '*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*' Do we practise that in our lives?

Abigail was also wise about choosing when to tell Nabal what she had done. She didn't risk inflaming the dispute further by telling him while he was drunk, as he might have decided to attack David or respond in another irrational way. She waited until he was sober and when he realised what the consequences of his past actions could have been he appears to have had a stroke and died several days later. God's ways are always better than ours. Nabal's insult to David was avenged, but only Nabal paid the price. Are we prepared to allow God to avenge our wrongs, or do we feel we have to act ourselves?

In **Romans 5:14-19** Paul compares Adam and Jesus, showing that Adam brought sin and death to all his descendants, but Jesus brought the gift of life and acceptance by God. We have Adam's gift thrust on us when we are born as our inheritance, but we need to accept Jesus' gift for ourselves. Then we will be free from our inheritance and be reconciled to God, through Jesus.

Abigail turned aside David's wrath against Nabal and his entire household. Jesus has turned aside God's wrath from us. Abigail accepted the blame for behaviour she didn't commit, Jesus took the punishment for sins that weren't his. What is your response to his great gift of love?

## Psalm 17

## A prayer of David.

- <sup>1</sup> *Hear, O LORD, my righteous plea;  
listen to my cry.  
Give ear to my prayer—  
it does not rise from deceitful lips.*
- <sup>2</sup> *May my vindication come from you;  
may your eyes see what is right.*
- <sup>3</sup> *Though you probe my heart and examine me at night,  
though you test me, you will find nothing;  
I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.*
- <sup>4</sup> *As for the deeds of men—  
by the word of your lips  
I have kept myself  
from the ways of the violent.*
- <sup>5</sup> *My steps have held to your paths;  
my feet have not slipped.*
- <sup>6</sup> *I call on you, O God, for you will answer me;  
give ear to me and hear my prayer.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Show the wonder of your great love,  
you who save by your right hand  
those who take refuge in you from their foes.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Keep me as the apple of your eye;  
hide me in the shadow of your wings*
- <sup>9</sup> *from the wicked who assail me,  
from my mortal enemies who surround me.*
- <sup>10</sup> *They close up their callous hearts,  
and their mouths speak with arrogance.*
- <sup>11</sup> *They have tracked me down, they now surround me,  
with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.*
- <sup>12</sup> *They are like a lion hungry for prey,  
like a great lion crouching in cover.*
- <sup>13</sup> *Rise up, O LORD, confront them, bring them down;  
rescue me from the wicked by your sword.*
- <sup>14</sup> *O LORD, by your hand save me from such men,  
from men of this world whose reward is in this life.*
- You still the hunger of those you cherish;  
their sons have plenty,  
and they store up wealth for their children.*
- <sup>15</sup> *And I—in righteousness I will see your face;  
when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*

## David Study 4 – When the Waiting is Long

Although in David God had found ‘a man after his own heart’ (1 Samuel 13:14), David did not always get things right. We have already seen that he responded impetuously when Nabal refused to give supplies to David’s men. On that occasion bloodshed was only averted by God through the intervention of Abigail, Nabal’s wife.

To escape Saul, David fled to Samuel at Ramah but had come back to meet Jonathan. Jonathan’s news was that Saul was still intent on killing him, so David went to Nob where the tabernacle and priests were located.

Reading: 1 Samuel 21:1-3,7-9 – David at Nob

<sup>1</sup>David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, “Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?”

<sup>2</sup>David answered Ahimelech the priest, “The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions.’ As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. <sup>3</sup>Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.”

<sup>7</sup>Now one of Saul’s servants was there that day, detained before the LORD; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul’s head shepherd.

<sup>8</sup>David asked Ahimelech, “Don’t you have a spear or a sword here? I haven’t brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king’s business was urgent.”

<sup>9</sup>The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one.”

David said, “There is none like it; give it to me.”

1. What did David answer when Ahimelech the priest asked him why he had come to Nob alone? Why do you think David lied? Are lies ever appropriate?

2. Who was present as well as the priests? Do you think David should have anticipated problems because he was seen at Nob?

3. How responsible do you think we are for the consequences of our actions, when we realise they may cause problems, but we don’t do anything about it? Where do we draw the line of responsibility?

## Reading: 1 Samuel 22:6-10 – Saul Kills the Priests of Nob

<sup>6</sup>Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him. <sup>7</sup>Saul said to them, “Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? <sup>8</sup>Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.”

<sup>9</sup>But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul’s officials, said, “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. <sup>10</sup>Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

4. What further light is shed on why David went to Nob, from this passage?

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5. Consider Saul’s speech to his men in verses 7-8. What is his prime concern? How would you describe the tone of the speech? Does he sound like a king speaking?

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## Reading: 1 Samuel 22:11-23 – Saul Kills the Priests of Nob (continued)

<sup>11</sup>Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father’s whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king. <sup>12</sup>Saul said, “Listen now, son of Ahitub.” “Yes, my lord,” he answered.

<sup>13</sup>Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?”

<sup>14</sup>Ahimelech answered the king, “Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king’s son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? <sup>15</sup>Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father’s family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.”

<sup>16</sup>But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father’s whole family.”

<sup>17</sup>Then the king ordered the guards at his side: “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.” But the king’s officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. <sup>19</sup>He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

<sup>20</sup>But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David. <sup>21</sup>He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. <sup>22</sup>Then David said to Abiathar: “That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father’s whole family. <sup>23</sup>Stay with me; don’t be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me.”

6. What is Saul’s accusation against Ahimelech and how does Ahimelech reply?

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7. Do you think Ahimelech’s reply is reasonable? Does Saul? What does he order?

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8. What is the response of Saul’s guards? Does Saul take notice of them? By eliminating the priests, what were the consequences for Saul’s future leadership?

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9. When Abiathar tells David the terrible thing that has happened, what is David’s response? How does David’s response give him an extra resource to keep him closer to God? (see **1 Samuel 22:23**) How does David’s situation compare with Saul’s?

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At this point the power seems to be in Saul’s hands. In our world today, living Christ’s way can seem a weak option. However staying in opposition to Christ makes no sense, when we see him as he really is.

David could be hasty in his decisions and sometimes made mistakes. After he left Nob, he went to Achish, the king of one of the Philistine cities, looking for protection from Saul, but after he was recognised he pretended to be insane to avoid capture and was thrown out of the city. However he was also quick to admit it when he was wrong and did his best to make up for the trouble he had caused. Something that Saul never did.

Saul kept on chasing David, until once again David decided the only solution was to take himself and his followers out of Saul’s reach.

Reading: 1 Samuel 27:1 to 28:2 – David Among the Philistines

<sup>1</sup>But David thought to himself, “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.”

<sup>2</sup>So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maach king of Gath. <sup>3</sup>David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. <sup>4</sup>When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.

<sup>5</sup>Then David said to Achish, “If I have found favour in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?”

<sup>6</sup>So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. <sup>7</sup>David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.

<sup>8</sup>Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.) <sup>9</sup>Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish.

<sup>10</sup>When Achish asked, “Where did you go raiding today?” David would say, “Against the Negev of Judah” or “Against the Negev of Jerahmeel” or “Against the Negev of the Kenites.” <sup>11</sup>He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, “They might inform on us and say, ‘This is what David did.’ ” And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory.

<sup>12</sup>Achish trusted David and said to himself, “He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever.”

<sup>28:1</sup>In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, “You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army.”

<sup>2</sup>David said, “Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do.”

Achish replied, “Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life.”

10.

- a. What was David’s reason for going to the king of Gath? Did his plan work?

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- b. What were the further consequences of David’s solution? What might have been a better solution, if David had considered all the consequences?

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- c. Does a successful result always mean we acted the right way? What else do we need to consider?

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11. What was missing from David’s plans? Whose help was he disregarding?

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12.

- a. Who did David raid to get supplies for himself and his followers?

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- b. How did David’s answer to Achish about his activities, lead him to further sin?

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13.

- a. What false conclusion did Achish draw because David had lied to him?

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- b. How did this put David in an even more difficult situation?

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14. It’s axiomatic that one lie leads to more.

- a. What are the problems with getting out of trouble by lying?

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- b. How do we break the cycle when we have done something wrong and lying seems the best way out?

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God’s work always needs to be done in God’s way. Twice David decided to go to the Philistines and twice it created problems for him. The first time he had to pretend madness to save his life, this time he was saved by Philistine commanders who (probably wisely) didn’t trust his loyalty to them. But when he returned to his base of Ziklag, he discovered that the Amalekites had taken the opportunity of the men being away to carry out some raiding of their own.

Reading: 1 Samuel 30:3-10 – David Destroys the Amalekites

<sup>3</sup>When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. <sup>4</sup>So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. <sup>5</sup>David’s two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him, <sup>8</sup>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.”

<sup>9</sup>David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind, <sup>10</sup>for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.

15. David appeared to have escaped the results of his deception when he and his men weren’t allowed to fight in the battle. What did they find when they returned to Ziklag?

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16. What was the reaction of David’s men? Who did David turn to in his time of trouble?

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17.

a. What did David do this time that he apparently hadn’t done when he decided to live at Ziklag?

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b. What can we do to develop the habit of consulting God **before** we act?

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David and his men found an Egyptian slave who had been abandoned by the Amalekites when he became sick. They gave him food and water and he led them to the Amalekites who were celebrating their successful mission. David and his men defeated them and recovered all that they had taken, including their wives and families.

Reading: 1 Samuel 31:1-7 – Saul Takes His Life

<sup>1</sup>Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup>The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. <sup>3</sup>The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically.

<sup>4</sup>Saul said to his armour-bearer, “Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me.”

But his armour-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. <sup>5</sup>When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup>So Saul and his three sons and his armour-bearer and all his men died together that same day.

<sup>7</sup>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.

18. Saul spent his entire reign as king fighting the Philistines and keeping them out of Israel. What inheritance did he leave to Israel? Who did he leave to lead them?

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## Reading: 2 Samuel 2:4 and 5:3 – David Anointed King Over Judah and Israel

*2:4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.*

*5:3 When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.*

God had promised that David would become king, but often there is a delay between the promise of God and its fulfilment. This time of delay is like being in 'God's Waiting Room'. David had to wait some fifteen years to finally become king over Israel; are you still waiting for God to answer a prayer you have been praying for many years?

If so, will you resolve to continue praying and leave the answer in God's hands to be carried out in his time?

Will you ask God to help you be content while you are 'in His Waiting Room', handling the situations you face by looking to Him first for guidance and wisdom? Then, we fill our time by trusting Him and turning our trust into prayer, as in the Lord's Prayer '*your kingdom come, your will be done*'.

All God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus. **2 Corinthians 1:20** says '*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.*' In the life of faith we continually pray that the Lord will make it clear to all people that Jesus is the one, true King.

### Summary: David Study 4 – When the Waiting is Long

God's work must be done in God's way and God never condones sin. David often '*enquired of the Lord*' before deciding a course of action, and it appears that is what he decided to do after he had to run away from Saul's court to prevent Saul killing him.

David journeyed alone to Nob where the priests and tabernacle were located. Ahimelech the priest asked David why he was alone. Instead of telling Ahimelech the truth, David lied, saying he was on a mission for Saul. Perhaps David felt that if he didn't tell Ahimelech he was fleeing from Saul it would protect the priest later on, or perhaps David was just rattled and lied for his own protection. Whatever the reason, the result was disastrous. David was seen by Saul's head shepherd who later told Saul that David had been received by the priests at Nob. Saul refused to accept Ahimelech's word that David said he was acting on Saul's behalf and ordered the death of all the priests. Only one, Abiathar, escaped and joined David in hiding. By this act Saul took another step away from God, cutting off any approach he might have made to God through the priests.

David's reaction to Abiathar's news showed he was aware he was putting the priests in danger, but didn't act on that knowledge, as he accepted responsibility for their death, even though Saul was the one who did the killing. We are also guilty when we fail to try to prevent bad consequences which we can see arising from our actions. Inaction can be as bad, or even worse, than action.

However David's actions weren't always good either. Although David had been anointed king, he seemed very far away from attaining that position. He was a fugitive, hunted by Saul and although he was gathering others to help him, he couldn't even go home. It isn't surprising that as this situation dragged on he became tired and discouraged and decided he needed to be out of Saul's reach.

So David went into the Philistines' territory and, with the permission of Achish, the king of Gath, he settled with all his men in the town of Ziklag. When Achish asked David what he and his men had been doing, David lied and said they had been raiding the Negev which was Judah's territory. Achish thought that David would never be accepted back by the Israelites and would always be his servant. But in fact David was leaving the Israelites alone and raiding other tribes such as the Amalekites. To maintain the lie, David and his men had to totally wipe out all the people from the towns he raided so no one was left to report back to Achish. His strategy worked, but just because a plan is successful, it doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. David's lies gave Achish sufficient confidence in him to appoint David and his men as his bodyguard for a battle with the Israelites, and it was only the distrust of the other Philistine leaders that prevented David going to war against the Israelites.

While David and his men were away, the Amalekites raided Ziklag, and abducted all the women, children and livestock. David and his men were devastated when they returned, and David's men talked of stoning him. This time David turned to God and asked him what to do, something he seemed to have neglected before settling in Philistine territory. God directed David to chase the Amalekites and with God's help they recovered their families and all that had been taken. Some of the men hadn't gone the entire way, but David decreed that they should have an equal share of the returned goods. If God has made us strong or wise enough to be able to gain material wealth we need to be prepared to share with other Christian brothers and sisters who don't have the opportunities we have.

The result of the battle between Israel and the Philistines was that Saul and his sons were killed, Israel was routed, and many Israelite towns were inhabited by the Philistines. This was the inheritance that Saul left the Israelites, because he had chosen to follow his own ways and not God's. Finally the road was clear for David to become king and, after a further wait, David was crowned king of all Israel. God does keep his promises, but in his time, not ours and whenever we try to hurry God along, or give him a helping hand, we create obstacles in our own way. Let us remember that God's way is always best.

## Psalm 34

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left.

- <sup>1</sup> *I will extol the LORD at all times;  
his praise will always be on my lips.*
- <sup>2</sup> *My soul will boast in the LORD;  
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.*
- <sup>3</sup> *Glorify the LORD with me;  
let us exalt his name together.*
- <sup>4</sup> *I sought the LORD, and he answered me;  
he delivered me from all my fears.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Those who look to him are radiant;  
their faces are never covered with shame.*
- <sup>6</sup> *This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;  
he saved him out of all his troubles.*
- <sup>7</sup> *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,  
and he delivers them.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Fear the LORD, you his saints,  
for those who fear him lack nothing.*
- <sup>10</sup> *The lions may grow weak and hungry,  
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Come, my children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*
- <sup>12</sup> *Whoever of you loves life  
and desires to see many good days,  
<sup>13</sup> keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from speaking lies.*
- <sup>14</sup> *Turn from evil and do good;  
seek peace and pursue it.*
- <sup>15</sup> *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous  
and his ears are attentive to their cry;  
<sup>16</sup> the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,  
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.*
- <sup>17</sup> *The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.*
- <sup>18</sup> *The LORD is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*
- <sup>19</sup> *A righteous man may have many troubles,  
but the LORD delivers him from them all;  
<sup>20</sup> he protects all his bones,  
not one of them will be broken.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Evil will slay the wicked;  
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.*
- <sup>22</sup> *The LORD redeems his servants;  
no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.*

## Suggested Hymns and Songs

**Theme:** Trust and Obey  
Through all the Changing Scenes of Life

### Study 1 – Significant to God

Psalm 23 The Lord's my Shepherd

The King of Love my Shepherd is

Trust and Obey

Search me, O God, and Know my Heart Today

Great is Your Faithfulness

### Study 2 When Friends Become Enemies

What a friend we have in Jesus

God is our Strength and Refuge

Breath on me Breath of God

Father I Thank You for all that You've Done

I lift my eyes to the quiet hills

### Study 3 – When Anger Strikes

Be Still my Soul

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

Change my Heart O God

Blessed is the Man (Psalm 1)

May the Mind of Christ my Saviour

### Study 4 – When the Waiting is Long

O Jesus I have promised

Safe in the Shadow of the Lord

Our God our Help in Ages Past

Through All the Changing Scenes of Life

It is Well with my Soul