

A 12 Week Devotion
1 Samuel 16:1-13

Youth Becoming Leaders 2023
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YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS
High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

ASBURY UNIVERSITY
Academic Excellence & Spiritual Vitality

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INTRODUCTION & INSTRUCTIONS



Sometimes there are stories you have heard all your life that are so familiar that you know them by heart. Often, these stories become so familiar and commonplace that we can miss their beauty. Such is the story of David. Ask anyone who King David was, and almost everyone will recall the story of David defeating Goliath, or as a six-year-old at my church told me, "That's the story where David whips the giant."

During YBL (Youth Becoming Leaders), we talked about the life of David, with particular emphasis on David's call, for two weeks. Our two great speakers, Teesha Hadra and Chris Bounds, preached during the evening worship services. Wise teachers instructed each day, reflecting on these passages. And we examined our communities to identify the needs present and how we might help meet them.

Over the next 12 weeks, you and your mentor or protégé will continue to explore this call story through a series of 12 devotions.

"But why?" you ask. "Isn't this a bit of overkill? Won't this do the very thing you talked about—make it so familiar that we miss the beauty of the story?"

We strongly believe that sometimes something becomes commonplace because we fail to look for new themes, new angles on the story, and new ways of seeing God at work. Our goal is that the next 12 weeks will serve as just that—a collaborative effort between the YBL participant, the mentor, and the leaders of YBL (who wrote these devotions) as you continue to ask and answer the question, "How do I respond to God's call on my life?"

LIFE OF DAVID

1040 BC: David, youngest son was born
2 Sam 5:4

David (15-20 years old) defeats Goliath
I Samuel 17

David (25-30 years old) is a fugitive from Saul
I Samuel 21:10-15;23

David (about 30 yrs old) becomes king at Hebron
2 Samuel 5:4-5

David (37 years old) becomes king over all of Israel and conquers Jerusalem
2 Samuel 5:4-5

Palace built, Philistine and Aramean campaigns

David's kingdom was established (47 years of age). *2 Samuel 2:1-5:5*

David (47 yrs of age) sins with Bathsheba.
2 Samuel 2:1-5:5

While David (age 45-50 yrs old) was king, his son Amnon rapes Tamar
2 Samuel 2:13

Absalom kills Amnon, flees to Geshur, stays 3 years

Absalom returns to Jerusalem
2 Samuel 14:28

Absalom sees David's (54-59 yrs of age) face after 2 years in Jerusalem
2 Samuel 15:7

Absalom wins the hearts of Israel over 4 years
2 Samuel 5:7

Absalom becomes king in Hebron, David (61 yrs of age) flees Jerusalem
2 Samuel 15:13-23

Absalom killed
2 Samuel 18

Sheba's rebellion against David
2 Samuel 20

David (65-67 years of age) becomes exhausted in Philistine battle
2 Samuel 21:15

David died at the age of 70
2 Samuel 5:4-5; cf. 1 Kings 2:11



For each of the 12 devotions, we would like you to read the devotion individually and answer the questions. We want to encourage you to write out your answers. Then, when you come together, use the questions and answers as a guide for your time together.

You can sometimes have differing views on things. You sometimes will not. That is OK. What is important is how you engage each other in this process and take the Scripture passage with all its implications seriously.

Part of biblical interpretation is recognizing that when we study Scripture together in a community, we often arrive at diverse ways of reading and interpreting it than when we do it alone. Therefore, we must read it individually and analyze it to understand its implications for our lives. But then, we must bring those interpretations and implications to the community and seek clarity on what the passage means.

When we do this, we believe that the Spirit helps correct errors and points us in the right direction as we attempt to live into this new understanding.

As you work through the devotions, you may encounter new ways of thinking about these passages than you have previously discovered. We believe that God's truth is always relevant and that no matter how many times we may have read a passage, God still has new facts for us to ponder and further implications for us to live out. Only as we open ourselves to this possibility can God speak to us through the passages we have read or heard spoken of countless times, such as the story we are studying over the next 12 weeks.

Please know that you both are in our prayers as you begin this journey. May God's wisdom enfold you, the Holy Spirit's peace surround you, and Jesus' grace overwhelm you as you work together to discover what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV).



WEEK One

To understand David's call, we must first know how we got here. Read the following passages: Judges 21:25; 1 Samuel 13:1-15; 15:17-26; and 16:1. Consider the typical journalism questions: who, what, where, when, and why.

"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."
— Judges 21:25

By this time in history, God had repeatedly delivered Israel from its enemies. God has helped them overcome significant obstacles—an Egyptian army, the Sea of Reeds, the walls of Jericho, the Jordan River, etc. Having witnessed these amazing miracles, it would only seem evident that the Israelites would be fully committed to God, right? Unfortunately, the answer was no.

When the author of Judges closes the book with the somber words of 21:25, he states more than just a political reality. True, Israel did not have a human king as most of their neighboring states did. But the author's focus here is that Israel has rejected God, who has been the King of Israel since God first called Moses to lead the people out of slavery. God as King has been at the forefront of all of Israel's victories, leading them eventually to the promised land that God had promised them. Yet now, their eyes wander around when Israel is happy and content. They look at their neighbors and desire to be like those other nations. And one of their defining qualities is that those nation-states have a human king.

Scholars have argued over the years whether Israel intended to reject God by choosing a human king. For me, it's a moot point. As Judges 21 points out, Israel had already rejected God before they even asked for a king (which doesn't officially occur until 1 Samuel 8:5). In other words, they had decided that it was more important to follow the ways of the other nations than to follow God.

WEEK One

Of course, we today read these passages and think, “Poor Israel. They had God with them and chose to look to the world to fill their needs. They made such poor decisions. It’s a good thing we don’t do that today.”

Yet, the reality is that we do. While all of you in this devotional or serving as mentors have chosen to follow God, we still often make decisions that reflect Judges 21:25— “everyone did as they saw fit.” How often do you find yourself in a situation where, upon reflection, you realize this is not indicative of God being the King and Lord of your life? How often do you say or do things where you are more interested in doing what you want than what God wants? How often do you come to the end of the day and, upon reflection, recognize the multiple ways that you served yourself and your needs rather than God and God’s desires for your life?

We don’t like to think about these things. We prefer to be the ones God calls to serve. We want to be the David of 1 Samuel 16, the one whom God anoints and consecrates to be the next great leader. We want to be the ones God has great plans for and make a tremendous difference in the church and the world. And we want to be the ones of whom it is said, “They are a person who reflects God’s own heart.”



But as 1 Samuel 13 and 15 point out, even when God chooses and anoints, we can still screw things up when we fail to keep God at the center of our lives. When we allow our selfish motives and desires to come to the forefront and push God to the background, we end up like Saul, making stupid decision after stupid decision, often in the name of “doing God’s work.”

WEEK One

We think we're doing the right things, but in reality, we are just doing what we want and trying to make it holy by calling it God's desire.

As you begin these 12 weeks together, I want to encourage you to think about just how important it was for David and for you to keep God as the king of your life.

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. How does understanding the context into which God calls David better help you understand your call from God amid your context?

2. Because the people had rejected God as King, God gave in to their demands and gave them exactly what they wanted—even when it didn't turn out well. In other words, the people had to deal with the consequences of their demands. Can you think of a time when you wanted to do something you knew wasn't what God wanted for you? How did that turn out? What role, if any, do you think God played in that situation?

3. Israel wanted to be like her neighbors, even if that meant rejecting God. Why do you think it's human nature to want to act like those around us rather than do what God has called us to do?

4. Part of learning to keep God as King and Lord of our lives is learning to hear and understand what God wants of us. Discuss how you think you can listen to God's voice and what it will take to follow it.

Take time to pray for one another. Pray that over the next 11 weeks (and hopefully beyond), you will learn the importance of keeping God as the King of your lives.

WEEK Two

Meditate on Psalm 62.

If it helps you to focus, underline the qualities of God and circle the Psalmist's responses to God. Put stars next to lines that stand out to you. If you're feeling creative, rewrite some lines in your own words! Feel free to explore translations of the Bible. No one translation will give us everything. But some give us more poetic language than others. We like the New Living Translation, Amplified Bible, and the New International Version, too!

"So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.
Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'
So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah."
— 1 Samuel 16:12-13

"David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years."
— 2 Samuel 5:4-5

After his anointing in 1 Samuel 16, David waited over a decade—maybe more than 15 years—until stepping into full kingship after the death of King Saul. Even after Saul's death, David had to wait through the war with those loyal to the line of Saul and who opposed David's kingship. Try putting yourself in David's shoes. Imagine yourself destined to be king, anointed by a prophet in front of your whole family, but years later, wandering through the wilderness and crying out to God in desperation and confusion.

WEEK Two

In those 15 years of waiting, David lives many lives. He spends his youth as a shepherd, plays the harp in Saul's court, fights Goliath, heroically leads Saul's army, and flees Saul's jealousy in the "strongholds of the wilderness" (1 Sam. 23:14). Throughout that time, God is refining David. 1 Samuel 16:13 tells us that the Lord came powerfully upon David. The Hebrew word here can be translated to mean "to rush," but it also carries connotations of prosperity and breaking out. So, we could say that David experienced a rushing out or the breaking out of God's goodness and blessing over him at the time of his anointing. It's not something small. This was monumental.



We can assume that David's boyhood as a shepherd was primarily spent in solitude. Without much effort, one can conjure up mental images of David singing to his sheep and contemplating the works of the Lord on the hillside. When he shows up to fight his first battle against the Philistine army, he is full of zeal for the Lord and confidence in the Lord's power. Later, when David is fleeing King Saul in the wilderness, he collects an army of men to secretly fight for the Lord. Then David is given the choice to kill Saul, but David chooses not to take it. We can take these things as signs that David has been with God. The Spirit of the Lord is powerfully with him.

So, although David has to wait to become King, we know that God uses his time of waiting to grow David's dependence. The Spirit of God stays with David in his season of waiting, and instead of trying to fast-track his way to the throne on his own, David waits on God's timing and continues to pursue God amid the unknown.

WEEK Two

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. Put yourself in David's shoes as he's fleeing Saul in the wilderness. What do you feel towards God? What doubts do you have about your calling?

2. What do you feel called to do in your own life? Whom do you see yourself being in 5, 10, or 20 years?

3. What does waiting faithfully on God's timing look like? What are ways that you try to avoid waiting on God's timing?

4. How could God be using your current experiences to shape you for Kingdom work in the future?

Take time to pray for one another. Pray for strength in the waiting. Invite the Holy Spirit into what God has for you today and in the future. Pray for ears to hear God's leading.

WEEK Three

Meditate on Psalm 25. Sit somewhere by yourself and try reading it out loud once or twice. How can this be your prayer today?

"Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.
"I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine."
— 1 Samuel 17: 38-40

In Israel, in the time of David, shepherds used slings to ward off animals and protect the flock. Elsewhere in the ancient world, slings were weapons of war, powerful enough to hurl stones at upwards of 150mph. Considering his life as a shepherd, David likely had years of practice to perfect his use of the sling. This may be why later in the story of David and Goliath, David defeats the giant with exceptional precision and speed.

Notice in the scripture passage above that David tries on Saul's armor but refuses to take them out into battle because he's "not used to them." Instead, in bravery and apparent foolishness, David uses what he knows— the skill he's been honing in the fields for years. Don't make a mistake here. We're not arguing for ignoring sound advice and doing what you think is best. Had David not stewarded his time as a shepherd well, if he hadn't been faithful in his youth, protecting his flock, then his encounter with Goliath could have killed him.

WEEK Three

We'd like to ask you to consider this: sometimes, in ministry, it can be easy to wear the calling of others. There are heroes we look up to, people who have taken care of us and spoken into our lives. We want to make them proud, so we can easily spend valuable preparation time wearing someone else's armor.

The truth is that God has given everyone different gifts, and the Holy Spirit uses diversity in the body to make it stronger. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul speaks to the church in Corinth about spiritual gifts and the makeup of the body of Christ. He explains that the Spirit of God knits them together as one body, and that there must be different body parts for the body to function as it should.

"If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?"
— 1 Cor. 12:17

For the body of Christ to function healthily, we need people with all kinds of spiritual gifts. Here, Paul lists "apostles, prophets, teachers, those with the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages" (1 Cor. 12:28). Earlier in the same chapter, Paul lists gifts like "wisdom, special knowledge, discernment" (1 Cor. 12:4-10).



WEEK Three

The point is that the body of Christ is working as God designed it when people faithfully use the abilities God has given them.

There is a temptation to desire gifts and skills that are beyond what God has given us. We want to be in front; we want to be great musicians; we want to have natural gifts of teaching; or we want to be better public speakers. It's not wrong to desire these things or to work at getting better at them. In fact, that can be a good and valuable thing! If we learn anything from this story of David, good practice can be the difference between life and death.

However, each of us has something God has already given us, and we do a disservice to the body when we aren't faithful. Faithfulness, where we are, helps us be the kind of leaders who recognize our gifts and can lead confidently, trusting that God has given us exactly what we need.



WEEK Three

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What are the things that you are good at? The things you love to do or that make you feel the most alive? Of those things, which ones could you grow and develop if you were intentional about it?

2. How could you use those things to build up the body of Christ?

3. What are the ways that you are wearing another person's armor right now? What are the things (gifts, responsibilities) you think people have tried to put on you but don't feel natural to how God has gifted you? Do you believe that these things are worth trying to grow into?

4. What is one concrete way you could use your gifts in your church or youth group to fill a gap that may be missing right now?

Pray for how God would like to use your gifts in your church or community. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be bold in the skills and talents God has uniquely given each of you.

WEEK Four

Read and meditate on Psalm 17.

Practice noticing words or phrases that stand out to you, presenting them to God, and asking what the Holy Spirit could be trying to say to you.

"But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do."
— Acts 13:22

In contrast to Saul, who was a king that the people chose, David is the king "after God's heart" whom God chooses as a rejection and replacement for Saul. Could you take a moment to read the following: 1 Samuel 13:7-14, 15:10-25? Here we see two examples of King Saul failing to obey God. In chapter 13, Saul cracks under the pressure of leadership, and instead of waiting on the Lord's timing, he chooses to act on his own will and offer a sacrifice to the Lord, despite having been instructed to wait for Samuel to offer it. In chapter 15, Saul and his army disobey the Lord's command to defeat the Amalekites by leaving some of their livestock alive and plundering the village for valuables. In 1 Samuel 15:22-23, Samuel offers a chilling rebuke of Saul:

"But Samuel replied, 'What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."
—1 Samuel 15:22-23

WEEK Four

Contrast this with David, an unlikely man God searches out to be King. In the ancient Near East, the concept of "heart" had to do more with passion and zeal than it did affection. For Scripture to describe David as a man after God's heart means that David was one whose passions were like God's or one whom God was putting in place to fulfill his desires. In modern Western culture, we tend to view our lives in physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental compartments. Consider how we approach various ailments- we have different doctors and remedies for physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual hurts. However, understanding the body in ancient Israelite culture- the original audience of 1 & 2 Samuel- was exceedingly more integrated. For David to be a man after God's "heart" speaks to David's whole being, not just one aspect of his person, being oriented toward the passions of God.



Take a moment to read 1 Samuel 24: 1-13. David spares Saul's life, despite the advice of his men and despite his human judgment that may say that Saul deserves to be killed because Saul himself is after the life of David. However, in verse 13, David quotes Proverbs, saying, "From evil people come evil deeds," making the distinction known between himself and Saul.

David chooses righteousness and allows the Spirit to convict him upon cutting off Saul's garment hem, which leads to this powerful interaction. The difference between Saul and David, at this point, is obedience— holiness. In former weeks, we've talked about David's season of waiting and preparation.

WEEK Four

It is faithfulness in the wilderness that produces holiness in David. This contrast between David and Saul is remembered in the passage above from Acts 13, where the difference hinges on obedience and desire for the ways of God. To be someone after God's heart, we must desire God's ways with everything we are.

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What words or phrases stand out from this week's Psalm? What could God be trying to say to you through this Psalm?

2. How would you have responded if you had been in David's shoes in 1 Samuel 24- alone in the cave with Saul?

3. What does holiness mean to you? What priority does obedience to God take in your life right now? What other things are you obedient to besides God?

4. Based on your definition or others you've heard, do you think holiness is possible? What would you need to be holy?

Pray for one another for God to reveal what holiness means for your life right now. Pray for the Lord to guide each of you when the right choice is hard.

WEEK Five

Begin by reading Psalm 22. Note the changes throughout the Psalm in David's attitude, the figures or people(s) depicted, how God acts, and to whom. Consider the images or phrases that stand out to you or what it tells you about God's character.

"But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from the Philistine!"
— 1 Samuel 17:34-37

A first read of this passage leaves a takeaway of David's zeal, ferocity, and maybe some recollection of Jesus' words in Matthew 18: 12-14. Perhaps you read it and think about the arrogance of David, to consider himself strong enough to kill Goliath, or you are even skeptical about the truth behind David's words- is he just a proud shepherd blowing smoke? However, a closer reading notices a shift in verse 17 that is crucial to the whole story of King David: "The Lord... will rescue me from the Philistine!" No longer does the power or responsibility of conquering Goliath rest with David, but with the Lord, who has already proven faithful to David and faithful to Israel. And if we consider the story of David and Goliath itself further (like we will next week), it is clear that David could not have defeated Goliath unless God willed it.

If we take a step back, we notice in this small moment in 1 Samuel the bigger picture of David's life, which is hinted at in this week's Psalm, Psalm 22.

WEEK Five

The trajectory of Psalm 22 starts with David's moaning self-pity, praises God's holiness, and declares God's omnipotence in knowing David in the womb. The reader is then given the image of the cross starting in verse 16 and reminded of God's justice to all of Israel and, ultimately, to the world. King David, to whom two canon books are dedicated, is an unlikely candidate until we consider God's greater purposes in history. When Saul falls from favor, God is searching out a King who will pursue the Creator; the Father will not be thwarted by Saul. God doesn't allow David's sin to thwart plans either. There are consequences, but the royal line of David is still prized, and it is through David's line that God is born incarnate.

From the Fall, and even from the beginning of the universe, God's desire was union with humanity as manifested in the incarnation. God acts throughout history through people to see that Kingdom purposes are fulfilled. In ways and with timing that doesn't make sense to us now, God intervenes in history to save humanity. Christ's salvific work in the crucifixion and resurrection is the ultimate intervention. However, we can be open to the possibility that God has stepped in in other ways along the way. In our passage from above, we read that God will step in to save David from Goliath just as God did from lions and bears. The Almighty stepped in to save the Israelites from Egypt, brought them out of exile, gave them prophets and judges, and gave them Kings to rule over them.

In the New Testament and the development of the early church, we trust that God's mighty hand was acting to spread the Gospel, to bring the Holy Spirit, to work through martyrs, and to establish order, creeds, and sacraments in the church. And today, we believe that God has not left us to our own devices— God will intervene and be glorified.

WEEK Five

The good news is that we participate in God's redeeming humanity, but we do not cause it; we don't control how it happens or what it looks like; we don't have to be perfect for God's plans to work out because God is bigger. Just as David is only a piece in the story of God, so are we only a part of everything God will do. God does it! Our role, then, is to listen to God, be obedient, pray for the Lord's purposes to be done, speak the truth in love, serve, and do what we can to be a part of God's plan. Not because our doing will accomplish it but because it is all joy to be a part of what God is doing!

"The poor will eat and be satisfied.
All who seek the Lord will praise him.
Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy.
The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to him.
All the families of the nations will bow down before him.
For royal power belongs to the Lord.
He rules all the nations.
Let the rich of the earth feast and worship.
Bow before him, all who are mortal, all whose lives will end as dust.
Our children will also serve him.
Future generations will hear about the wonders of the Lord.
His righteous acts will be told to those not yet born.
They will hear about everything he has done.
—Psalm 22:26-31

These are promises! We can rest assured that just as God rescued David from the lion, the bear, and the Philistine, God will rescue us, and the Lord's promises to humanity will be fulfilled.

WEEK Five

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. How do you believe God is working out “God’s purposes” or God’s plan today? What specific examples can you think of where God is intervening in humanity?

2. How are you currently a part of God’s bigger story? What can you do to be more a part of what God is doing in the world?

3. In what ways is it easy or hard for you to accept that you are not in control of God’s work? Are there times when you have felt it was your responsibility to make sure God was “seen” or known in a space or to a group of people beyond just speaking the truth to them? Are there times when you’ve felt it was your fault that people weren’t connecting with God?

4. What are some promises of God or truths of God that have been hard for you to believe recently?

As you close, pray that God will use you in his bigger story and that the Holy Spirit will give you faith to believe that God’s ways are good and that Jesus will fulfill the Lord’s promises to us.

WEEK Six

Read Psalm 18.

Work through the length of the psalm by reading it through quickly a couple of times to grasp the general flow of what David is saying, and then take a time or two to move through it slowly and notice what lines resonate with you.

"Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. 'Am I a dog,' he roared at David, 'that you come at me with a stick?' And he cursed David by the names of his gods. 'Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!' Goliath yelled.
David replied to the Philistine, 'You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!'
As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground.
So David triumphed over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone, for he had no sword. Then David ran over and pulled Goliath's sword from its sheath. David used it to kill him and cut off his head."
— 1 Samuel 17: 41-51a

The story of David and Goliath is one of those we've talked about before— the kind you hear every time.

WEEK Six

As children, we're fascinated by its impossibility, and something stirs within us when we learn that Goliath is defeated. Bad guys should permanently lose. Maybe now you read it, admire David's bravery, and praise God for how clearly the Father was part of Israel's victory. Take a moment to praise God because the Lord is victorious.

Wouldn't it be easy to say that this was the obstacle in David's life? Was this the only time David needed God or anyone to step in for him? The only time something didn't go as planned, or someone was out to get him? Because as you have learned about David, you know that thought is almost laughable. Obstacles are the story of David's life. Perseverance is the cologne he puts on in the morning; trouble is his next-door neighbor; the wayward wilderness is his home. We have psalm after psalm, where David begs to be saved from his enemies.

Take a moment to flip through the next couple of chapters. If your Bible has headers, you'll see numerous accounts of David fleeing for his life while battling different armies or running away from Saul. You'll also see multiple times when someone steps in to help David—Jonathan, Michal, his men, and the Holy Spirit. Never once is David left alone or defenseless. When David cries out to God, God hears and comes to David's rescue. This is why we can believe the Psalms that tell us God is a refuge and constant help, because we read in David's life that no obstacle matches God's power.



WEEK Six

One of the most complex parts about reading David's story and applying it to our lives is that a thorough read reminds us that while God cares for David and continually rescues him, God still allows these atrocities to occur. 1 Samuel 16:14 says, "Now the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and the Lord sent a tormenting spirit that filled him with depression and fear." Saul sins and loses God's favor; the Spirit of the Lord leaves him; David is anointed; and Saul becomes tormented by evil spirits. Over time, he grows in murderous jealousy, continually chasing David down for his life. There are moments in David's story —like this one—where we can ask, "God, why didn't you step in?" We don't know why God allows things to happen. We know that there is sin and powers of evil actively working against God's purposes. We know that God is good and that the Creator's ultimate plan is to reconcile all things to God. We know that God gives us free will to choose to follow the Lord's commandments or to walk in the way of sin.

We stand in the tension between a good God who promises to rescue us and a sinful world where evil and brokenness are prevalent in many ways. As people trying to pursue God's heart, we must believe that God will help us overcome obstacles, just like the Holy Spirit helped David. These can be personal or interpersonal obstacles relating to your ministry project, community, or even the globe.

In times of failure, we can seek out God's goodness and depend on the Lord to come to our aid. In the middle of loss (and in every season of life), we listen for God's voice, pour over the Word, spend time with Kingdom people, and trust Jesus. On the other side of failure, we rejoice in the God who has been good to us- who "show(s) unfailing love to the anointed, to David and all his descendants forever" (Psalm 18:50). We who are in Christ are inheritors of this unfailing love!

WEEK Six

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. Name some obstacles or failures you've experienced in the last six months. What happened? How did you respond? Where do you think God was in the midst of those? What have you learned on the other side of that situation, or if you are still in it, what are some things you could be taking away now?

2. Who are the people God has placed around you to help you in times of trouble?

3. As you think about the problem of evil in the world, is there a particular cause, person (or people group), or situation that makes you feel led to pray for God's intervention? Do that now; God is asking you to do more than pray.

Pray for God to sustain both of you as you seek the ways God has called you to love others. Pray for each of you to remember that God is present with you amidst failures and obstacles. Praise God for the times Jesus has been faithful and victorious in your life.

WEEK Seven



Begin this week with five minutes of silence. Find a spot where you can be alone, a comfy chair, or a front porch. Start by acknowledging that God is there with you and ask what the Holy Spirit has to say.

If you'd like, sit with a receiving posture, waiting to hear from the Lord. Start a timer. If your mind wanders, acknowledge the distraction and tell yourself you'll return to it later. Do what you can to be quiet with God. When your five minutes are over, make some notes, either on paper or mentally, about how it felt to stop for only five minutes and what you heard God saying to you.

"The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
Even when I walk through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.
You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord forever."
—Psalm 23

WEEK Seven

We've mentioned before those stories or passages that you've heard time and time again. Psalm 23 might be one of those.

The Church, throughout time, has made it into countless songs, artwork, devotions, podcasts, you name it. However, just like we've mentioned before, Scripture—the inspired word of God—is deep, rich, complex yet simple, and capable of being mined endlessly. God speaks to us as we are right now, as we have been, as individuals and as corporate bodies, young, old, male, female, educated, or still baffled. If you only read Psalm 23 above once, I invite you to reread it at least two more times.

It's interesting, though unsurprising, that David paints God as a shepherd. One can almost imagine David looking at his sheep in the field, considering how God cares for him. Or perhaps David wrote this Psalm later as a King, maybe even after his sin, and is looking back on his life, considering how God has been with him. If you do a quick Google search of "sheep facts," it's easy to see how the imagery here captures the experience of a sheep. Right from the first verse, "the Lord is my Shepherd, I have all that I need," humanity is placed in a simple place below the Lord. A sheep trusts his shepherd because he has no other choice. The Shepherd will provide for the sheep, and whether they know it or not, the sheep's chances of survival increase considerably when under the Shepherd's care.

Moving on to verse 2, the shepherd doesn't lead the sheep just anywhere, but to "green meadows" and "peaceful streams." The shepherd wants to take the sheep to places where they don't have to strive.

This is an image of heaven here in a story about sheep!

WEEK Seven

Scientists observe that sheep—especially the vulnerable ones who are pregnant or stockier than most—if they fall on their backs, cannot pick themselves up. Without assistance, they are prone to panicking to death. So, it's essential to a sheep that the shepherd would guide them along the right paths, but it's also to the shepherd's honor to keep the sheep safe. Even in darkness, the shepherd's rod and staff protect the sheep from attack and give comfort from the idea of attack. Verses 5 & 6 move to a prayer of praise from King David. Even the king acknowledges that everything he has is from God and that God's "goodness and unfailing love will pursue [him] in the presence of [his] enemies." God invites the most vulnerable *and* the most powerful to follow and trust in the Lord.

Chances are, as you read this or at some point, you've felt like you've been going nonstop recently. Your summer could have been packed with sunshine, friends, and opportunities. Perhaps now you're tired, worried about a future decision, or overwhelmed by recent changes in your life. Maybe you're staying on top of deadlines and due dates, but perhaps you've fallen behind. Trusting God right now could be easy, or it could seem impossible.

Psalm 23 is an invitation to reorient yourself to the rest God promises. God is the Good Shepherd who longs to guide you on paths where you will not fall, paths that end striving, where we can trust that God will fight for us. It is also an invitation to consider the things around you that point to God. For David, it is the imagery of a sheep following a shepherd. Once, I was reminded of God's endless mercy and grace while cleaning out a dirty car. Moment by moment, the Lord is present and desires to lead us and teach us. We, like good sheep, need only follow, obey, and watch.

WEEK Seven

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. When was the last time you took time to rest and be with God? How long has it been since you've set aside time to listen intentionally to what God is saying to you?

2. How easy is it for you to hear from God? What do you think happens when we take the time to listen to the Holy Spirit's voice?

3. Do you like to plan things out in advance, or do you "go with the flow?" How difficult would it be to hear if God pushed you in a different direction? How willing are you to follow?

4. What advice would you give to someone having difficulty hearing from and/or trusting God?

Consider if this is advice you need to give yourself today. Pray for God to help you hear the Spirit's leading. Pray for one another to be able to put faith and trust in God even when it is hard.

WEEK Eight



Find your way to Psalm 65. As you read, name one thing the passage reveals about the character of God. Then tell the Lord why you love and value this characteristic.

"Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well."
So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me." One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him." Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him."
—1 Samuel 16:14-23

WEEK Eight

In this passage, Israel's present and future Kings come face to face. One has just lost the Lord's favor, while the other carries the presence, peace, and acceptance of God.

We know God's plan for David will surpass simply being King Saul's personal music therapist. But do you think David knew that? He was a teenager who loved tending his sheep and writing songs for his God all day. Imagine David in the fields receiving the news of his call from his father. "Hey, Dave! Pen up the sheep and shower up. From now on, you're working for the King."

As we look at servanthood today, we must spend a moment with David in the pastures before he receives the call into Saul's service that will launch him into a lifetime of serving God's people.

Why? The truth is, when it comes to the calendar of our call, most of us have more in common with David in the pasture than David in the throne room. We are in a season of waiting. As David describes in his Psalms, we love our Father so much that we want to serve in small ways and with our whole lives. Here, however, many need help with the logistics of their specific call. How can I serve God? How will I know I am where God wants me? What if I miss my opportunity to fulfill my purpose?

Although God certainly requires action on our end at times, the most significant moments of our lives are preceded by seasons of praying, trusting, and waiting for God's timing. From this passage, we relearn something about our God and our call to serve: God designed us and wants to invite us into what the Holy Spirit is doing on earth. The door is open for us, and God receives all the glory.

WEEK Eight

Did David enter King Saul's service because he planned it himself? Not exactly. Instead, God was preparing David for what was next during his waiting season without David even realizing it. David was faithful to his family, his God, and his gifts, and God opened doors for David to serve in the Lord's bigger plan.

The Parable of the Talents (Matt 25: 14-30) reveals how God reacts to those who love the Lord through good stewardship: "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'" (Matthew 25:21)

Just like David was already serving God when he was working as a shepherd, so do we have the opportunity to love God where we are now, whether in high school, college, or your less-than-glamorous summer job. How can we do this? By developing our gifts and praying for opportunities to use them to serve God through serving others.

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What is your "pasture field" of waiting? What frustrates you about your waiting season? What are you learning about God because of where you are now?

2. What is a gift(s) or talent(s) you think God has given you? How do you think God uses that gift?

Ask God to show you a gift you have that you have not thought of before. It may be something you can do, but it also may be a quirk in your personality or the unique way you show love to your friends and family. How might God use that gift to serve/reveal the Lord's goodness to someone in your life right now? Take time to pray for God to show you this.

WEEK Nine

The intimacy we read about in Psalm 139 between the Creator God and creation identifies the greatest, intimate longing in every human heart: for God to be aware of us, want us, hold us, and lead us. As you read this Psalm, think of other things that compete to give you a false sense of belonging and let them be exposed as not enough in the light of the One who truly loves you.

"As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants."
— 1 Samuel 18:1-5

Considering they were in line for the same throne, David and Jonathan had every reason to hate each other and become total enemies. But one crucial thing completely altered the trajectory of their relationship: both had a deep love for and fear of God.

Think about the moment you first met your best friend. What intrigued and attracted you to that person? As soon as he heard David speak, Jonathan recognized in David something that also existed in himself. David and Jonathan's friendship also had a very active third party. The Spirit of God moved between them so that any chance of jealousy or rivalry was obliterated, and a pure love for each other was put in its place.

WEEK Nine



So much so that Jonathan could see past cultural expectations and his pride and accept that David, not himself, was Israel's next rightful king, giving David his robe showed Jonathan's submission to the will of God, but placing his armor on him meant Jonathan was leaving a literal piece of himself for David to carry.

Jonathan's love for God gave him eyes to see David as God saw him. Jonathan saw David as the person God intended David to be, as once broken but now redeemed, as a fascinating being with gifts and purpose.

This God-gifted vision, often called Imago Dei eyes, doesn't only change the way we see ourselves and the ones we love but also people who are impossible to love. When we see one another through the lens of Imago Dei, we believe Genesis when it says men and women were created in the image of God (*Imago Dei* is Latin for "image of God"). It means we choose to see the person before us as God sees them.

The problem is that sinful humans—the people we're trying to love and ourselves—naturally stray from being who God purposed us to be. But living the Imago Dei doesn't blind us from others' wrongdoings, imperfections, or disappointments. Instead, it sharpens our awareness of the character and love of God, who made everyone with an intention and chose the sacrifice of forgiveness and grace-giving.

WEEK Nine

"Imago Dei people" are eye to eye because both acknowledge their sin and are now instead pursuing what God desires for people. Consider again our Psalm and the desire of every human heart to be known, seen, and loved thoroughly by God. Knowing all that gets in the way of our experiencing the love and presence of God, we can consider it grace that there are people in the world longing to see others as God does— to speak to us God's truth, God's love, God's dignity, and delight. And we can join in this life as well, to talk into a broken world about the God who sees them as they deeply desire to be seen and cares for people perfectly.

Our greatest example to look to is our Jesus, who looked to the interests of others and "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:4-8)

Jonathan had every right to take up the issue with David, and Jesus had every right to take up the matter with us sinners. But our Lord chose to approach us with love and truth, always with our best interest in mind. God hasn't recycled our purpose so that we can approach others the same way by grace.

WEEK Nine

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What does being an Imago Dei (in the image of God) creation mean to you in your life right now? How does that knowledge diffuse the current stress you're experiencing?

2. Who sees the Imago Dei in you and calls out who you are in Christ? Who is someone you know who has forgotten or has never known their true reality as made in God's image?

3. Are there areas in your life or community where people are not treated with dignity and respect? As you consider, is God calling you to do anything?

Pray for God to continue to reveal the Imago-Dei in you and your mentor/mentee. Pray for opportunities to speak the truth in love to the people around you. Pray for God to give you the courage to live into your calling.

WEEK Ten

Read Psalm 38. Once you've read it through, try to sum up in a few words what you would say this psalm is about or the emotion the Psalmist is depicting.

"So the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story: "There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. The rich man owned a great many sheep and cattle. The poor man owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb and it grew up with his children. It ate from the man's own plate and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his arms like a baby daughter. One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest." David was furious. "As surely as the Lord lives," he vowed, "any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man!"
— 2 Samuel 12:1-7a

Shame makes people do unbelievable things. In the story of David, his shame at his action against Bathsheba clouds his judgment so much that he places Uriah— someone he has promised before God and the nation of Israel to lead, defend, and fight alongside— in a position to be murdered by the Edomites. David's fear of the consequences of his actions after his sin against Bathsheba leads him to attempt to manipulate Uriah into sleeping with his wife to cover up what David had done, which Uriah will not do because he refuses to leave his men. Note the vital contrast between David, who is not leading his men in battle this time, and Uriah, who refuses to leave his men.

WEEK Ten

Some scholars point out that the way the narrative of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 is told points to a more significant sin of David becoming like kings of other nations, who take from their people to satisfy their desires. In this case, we are told nothing of the relationship between David and Bathsheba. The story is propelled by action- lust and betrayal- not love. The only words Bathsheba is given in the story are to announce that David's adultery will have apparent consequences (2 Sam 11:5). David's identity as Israel's true covenant king is questioned. We are told that God is "displeased with what David had done" (2 Sam 11:27).

Enter Nathan. Just as Samuel the prophet found David where he was and gave him a kingly identity, Nathan finds David and reminds him of the God he serves and the king he is supposed to be. The scripture passage from above is an example of God speaking in ways that we can understand- through God's people, God pulls at our internal need for justice, love, and truth. Only when David steps outside of himself and feels compassion for the poor man in the story can he fully grasp the weight of what he has done. God's holy perspective allows us to step outside our shame and the weight of our circumstances to be reminded of who God is and how we can be made right with the Lord.

"...Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin. Nevertheless, because you have shown utter contempt for the word of the Lord by doing this, your child will die."

— 2 Samuel 12:13-14

Out of the depths of shame and deceit, David confesses what he has done to Nathan. David could have easily had Nathan killed for trying to rebuke him.

WEEK Ten

He had already covered up his adultery by marrying Bathsheba, and Uriah's death was an apparent casualty of war. There is nothing to fear but the wrath of God. We know David's heart is for God, so instead of continuing to hide and cover up, David confesses. Instead of choosing to turn from the Lord, David receives correction and turns toward the Creator. Pursuing God's heart is not about doing everything perfectly but about allowing ourselves to be corrected in our sins and choosing to turn toward God instead of away.

Everything under the sun can and will be redeemed by God's grace. This applies to you, your community, family, school, friends, and even your church. God places people around us who will speak the truth in love and guide us back to our God. Scripture points us to God's true character, and the Holy Spirit reveals where we do not align. When we fear that we have veered off course (or something seems to have pushed us off course), we can trust God's faithfulness and mercy to bring us back into the right relationship with our King. We need only seek God and trust.



WEEK Ten

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. How would you have reacted to Nathan's rebuke if you were David?

2. Do you think shame is a driving force in your community? What about you personally? How do you feel shame and fear impact the society around you?

3. Do you have people in your life that you can trust to speak the truth to you, even if it's hard to hear?

4. In what ways have you "veered off the path" either currently or in the past? How did God bring you back, or how do you think God will bring you back?

Pray for God's forgiveness of your sins today. Ask God to help you live a life in boldness and not shame. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to each of you what living a shame-free life looks like.

WEEK Eleven

Take a few minutes at the start of your time today to read Psalm 30. Think through the last week and praise God for three things from this last week.

"David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."
—1 Chronicles 29:10-13

As we read through David's life, there are many places where David is victorious. From killing a giant to sparing Saul's life (twice! 1 Samuel 24 and 26) to winning battles, David knew what it was like to be on the "winning side." The temptation had to be great for David to take some of the credit. People were singing songs about David that made him appear more prominent and more successful than he was. Other people wanted him to take the throne before it was God's time. Other people followed David and served him (check out 2 Samuel 23:8-39). People were excited about David.

But instead of David taking credit for any of this, David gives glory to God. He ensures that the praise is rightly placed on the one enabling all of this to happen: God. In the passage above, we see David, near the end of his life, standing before the people… and giving praise to God.

We see David speak his way into this pattern early in his life.

WEEK Eleven

In 1 Samuel 17:34-36, David tells King Saul why he should be allowed to fight Goliath. Read that passage over. Who is David giving credit to for all of these accomplishments? Himself. But then, in 1 Samuel 17:37, the very next verse, David's language changes: "The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." David begins giving credit to God. Jump ahead and read 1 Samuel 17:45-47. David is giving full credit to God– BEFORE the fight even starts!

Sometimes church and community leaders are leaders because they serve others. They might also be good at getting things accomplished. Many students and mentors who have come to YBL over the years have impressive track records of achieving great things in their schools, churches, and communities. This is important.

However, there is a temptation even in our serving. The attraction is to take credit for the good that happens. The temptation is to allow others to give US praise. It usually does not start with us asking people for praise and accolades, but when that praise does come, we can be tempted to think that it is our power, talent, or intelligence that has brought these remarkable things. When those moments hit, let's remember David's commitment to praising God in all things and David's desire to give God the glory.

"But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today."
–Deuteronomy 8:18



WEEK Eleven

One of the great things about the Bible is that it does not try to gloss over the story of people's lives. Sure, David does some great things through God's strength, but he also makes some mistakes. Those are included in the Bible! Why? If the Bible is trying to tell people how great God is, why include how God's people fall, mess up, struggle, doubt, and fail? The reason is simple. The authors of the Bible want to make sure we know who the true hero of every story is: God. The same is true today. God is the hero of our stories too!

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. As you think about some of the stories of David's life, is there one particular story that is impressive to you? Why does it seem so impressive?

2. How do you think David could continue to praise God amid so much "success" in his life?

3. What is a place in your life where people have praised you for what you have done? How did that feel when you heard that praise? How did you handle it?

4. Why do you think giving God praise for the good things is important?

5. What are one or two ways you might be able to remind yourself to praise God amid situations?

Spend some time praying for one another, thanking God for your relationship with each other and the ways God has and will move through you in your lives.

WEEK Twelve

Find somewhere without distraction and read through Psalm 51 two times. As you read, pay attention to a phrase or two God brings out.

The story of David's life is a story of comparison. It starts with Saul, a man God had to lead God's people but also a man who began to choose his way over God's way. Then David enters the story, and almost right away, the comparisons start. David, unlike Saul, seems to choose God's way over his desires. David praises God amid everything. Saul hears from God for a time but decides to do what Saul wants to do. David turns to God for wisdom and direction… and then obeys.

Until he doesn't.

"Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."
— 2 Samuel 12:13a

Before we get to David's choice, let's pause and realize that David and Saul have a choice. It is clear that Saul chose to disobey God (1 Samuel 15:11). It is also clear from the verse above that David decided to sin. They both have choices, and they both, at one point, decide to put their desires above God's. But when confronted, their reactions are different. Both confess (1 Samuel 15:24), but their true hearts come out in their actions. Saul continues to choose his way and walk outside of God's will. David confesses and then returns to pursuing God's heart.

We have choices, too—every day. We can choose to follow what God desires, or our desires, our way.

David makes a terrible choice. Actually, it starts with one choice and leads to another and another. 2 Samuel 11 tells the story of David's first bad choice: staying home from war while his men are out fighting.

WEEK Twelve

That choice leads to David being in a place to be tempted. He sees Bathsheba and sleeps with her. That leads to Bathsheba's pregnancy and then another wrong choice. David first tries to cover up his sin with a lie. When that does not work, he has Bathsheba's husband killed. It is amazing how one bad choice leads to another.

But the story does not end with David's bad choices. Confronted by the prophet Nathan, David confesses. But there is more to that verse: "Nathan replied, 'The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.'" (2 Samuel 12:13b) Yes, David sinned. He made a bad choice, but God does not leave David alone in that choice. God always offers a way back to redemption. This is true from the beginning with Adam and Eve, is true of David, and is true now. God provides a way out.

The truth is that there are consequences to sin, choosing our way, and bringing brokenness into the world. Adam and Eve had consequences, David had consequences, and we have consequences. But that is not the end of the story! God provides a way for us to return to the right relationship with our Creator.

It starts with confession and then a return to dependence on God for our direction in our choices instead of our way. David's choices differ from Saul's because David desires a deep relationship with God. Pursuing what God wants for our neighbor and us is a choice. The best part is that we do not have to do this alone. God has promised that the Holy Spirit will help guide us and give us strength.

WEEK Twelve

Have you ever made a mistake and chosen your way over God's? Of course. And so have all of us. Instead of hiding it and trying to pretend it never happened, allow those situations to become places where you can experience God's love and grace more. By confessing it and desiring that close relationship with God, you can experience true restoration and transformation in ways you never dreamed of!



WEEK Twelve

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. Can you think of a time when you chose God's way or your way? How did you choose? How did you feel after you made that choice?

2. Saul and David are both confronted by their sinful choices. What makes David's outcome so different than Saul's?

3. Why do you think it is challenging to confess our mistakes?

4. Do you think confessing and facing the consequences is better? Why?

5. Is there a place in your life where you choose your own way over God's? If you have not shared it, why not? Could this be a place and time to start choosing God's way again?

As you close your time in prayer together, spend some time praying this verse together: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10).

Know that mistakes are going to happen, but that God does not want to leave you in that place. Pray that God will give you the courage to confess and seek that deep relationship with God.