



Fall 2023



I SAMUEL

Leading God's Way



ALLIANCE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
COLLEGE CONNECTION

Adapted Edition

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Created by David Beaty and pastoral staff of River Oaks Community Church.

Scripture taken from the NIV © 2012

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Introduction

Thank you for joining us for our study of the Book of 1 Samuel. This is the first of three “double books” in the Old Testament (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles). 1 and 2 Samuel originally formed one book in the Hebrew Scriptures. Because of the compactness of the Hebrew language, both books could fit onto one scroll. When the Hebrew Bible was later translated into Greek, two scrolls were required, resulting in the two separate books we know today as 1 and 2 Samuel.

Scholars are not certain who wrote the book of 1 Samuel, however, many believe that the prophet Samuel compiled the information in the book and passed it on to Nathan and Gad, who served as prophets after Samuel. It is thought that these men perhaps wrote down what Samuel had passed along. The events in this book took place during the 11th century BC.

1 Samuel gives us the history of Israel during the transition from the rule of judges (as seen in the Book of Judges) to the era of the kings. This period of time from Samuel’s birth to Saul’s death lasted approximately 100 years. This transition involves three phases. The first phase (Chapters 1-7) is focused on the leadership of the prophet Samuel. In the second phase (Chapters 8-15), Samuel’s leadership overlaps with that of Israel’s first king, Saul. In the third phase (Chapters 16-31), the rule of Saul overlaps with the leadership of David, Saul’s replacement. The Book of 2 Samuel, which we will not cover in this study, is largely focused on the reign of David.

There are several key themes in the book of 1 Samuel. One of these is the sovereignty of God. God raises up leaders and removes them (Psalm 75:6-7), but He alone is the supreme ruler. As Psalm 103:19 states: “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.”

Another theme in 1 Samuel is the importance of obeying God’s Word. Saul was rejected as king because of His failure to obey the Lord (1 Samuel 15:23). Though David was merely a sinful human being, God spoke of him as one “who kept my commandments and my statutes” (1 Kings 11:34).

The contrast between Saul and David highlights another key theme in 1 Samuel: leadership. The book gives us valuable insights into the kind of leadership God approves, and how He uses leaders who seek to hear and obey His guidance.

Another key theme in 1 Samuel is the importance of prayer. The book begins with the account of Hannah’s prayer for a child (1:10). Samuel was born when God answered his mother’s prayer. Samuel was a leader who prayed for the people he led. His commitment to pray for the people of Israel is seen in his own declaration: “Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (12:23). Likewise, David was a man of prayer who often sought God’s guidance (30:8).

Like much of the Old Testament, the book of 1 Samuel is a form of Scripture known as “narrative.” Biblical narratives tell us about things that have happened, and how God has been at work in history. Because biblical narratives differ from the straightforward teaching style of much of the New Testament, it may be helpful to keep in mind some principles for interpreting narratives. These 10 principles come from *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart.

1. Rodger Crooks, One Lord, One Plan, One People: A Journey through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2011), 74.

Principles for Interpreting Narratives

1. An Old Testament narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.
2. An Old Testament narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere.
3. Narratives record what happened—not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral of the story.
4. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.
5. Most of the characters in Old Testament narratives are far from perfect and their actions are, too.
6. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge that on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically elsewhere in the Scripture.
7. All narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (cf. John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.
8. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.
9. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
10. In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.

Our study of 1 Samuel will be enriched by our study of selected psalms. Some of the psalms (including Psalms 34, 54, 56, and 59) were composed by King David in connection with events recorded in 1 Samuel. These psalms provide us with rich insights into David’s communication with God during times of crisis.

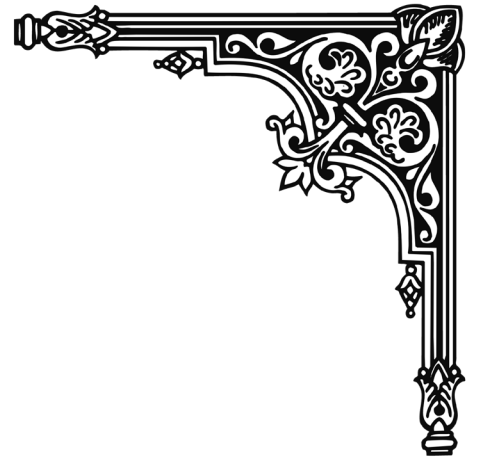
As we begin this study of 1 Samuel, may we remember the words of Hannah’s prayer recorded in 1 Samuel 2:2: “There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

May our great God and Savior give us a greater understanding of His holiness and His love as we study His Word!

In Christ,

David Beaty
(Pastor, River Oaks Community Church)

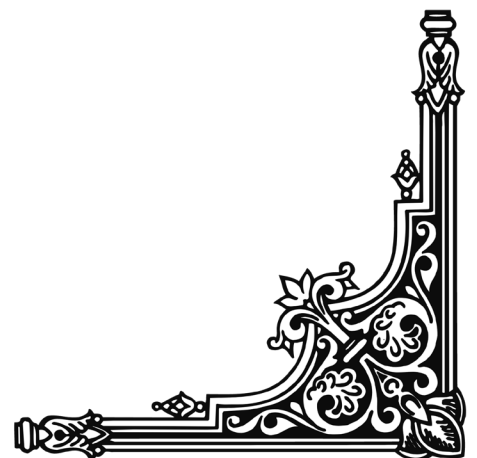
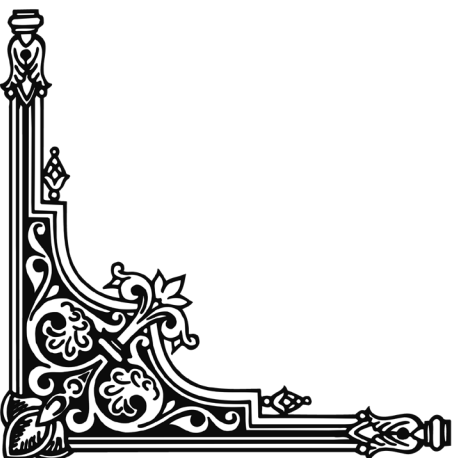
2. Gordon F. Fee and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 83-84.



Week I

***GOD HEARS AND
ANSWERS PRAYER***

I Samuel 1:1-2:11



BACKGROUND

During the time period of the judges, Israel as a nation was on a downward spiral. After many cycles of unfaithfulness and divine rescue, the people were languishing for a lack of godly leadership. Anarchy and rebellion were the norm for a people that were supposed to be under the guidance of a holy God. Instead of functioning as a united kingdom under God, Israel had become a band of loosely-bound tribal alliances with no form of military protection or clearly appointed leader. Into this political and religious free-for-all, God brought about the unlikely birth of a baby boy named Samuel (the last judge of Israel and key prophetic figure) who would play a pivotal role in Israel's history. Samuel would anoint two kings and unify the nation, leading them back to faithfulness to God. Interestingly, Samuel was born to a woman (Hannah) who was once barren; God brought life out of emptiness. Through Samuel's ministry, God would once again bring spiritual life out of barrenness.

WARM UP QUESTION

What has brought you the most joy over the past few years? The most grief? What brought relief from your grief?

Reading: 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. Chapter 1 is filled with many different emotions from those in the story. List some of the emotions that are described.
2. What do we learn about Hannah from the first two chapters? Note any observations on her character, spiritual life, and relationship to others.
3. How did Hannah deal with the disappointment of not being able to have children?
4. What was Eli's response to Hannah pouring out her soul to God in prayer? How was Hannah able to bear up under such sharp criticism?

5. Reflect on 1 Samuel 1:19. What does the text say God did in response to Hannah's devoted worship/prayer? What does this teach us about God?
6. Hannah completely credits God with having heard and answered her prayer for a son. 1 Samuel 1:21-28 describes what Hannah did with Samuel once he was weaned. What did Hannah do with Samuel? What is your response to Hannah's faith and commitment to release her son to God, fulfilling her vow?
7. Chapter two records Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of her son Samuel. She gave back to God what He had given to her. Describe Hannah's emotions in this prayer compared to her emotions in previous prayers. What might that suggest about the freedom and full range of expression involved in prayer?
8. What do we learn about God from Hannah's prayer (His works, character, extent of His rule, etc.)?
9. The language in v. 1-10 suggests more than a personal victory for Hannah. Looking back at Genesis 17:6 and 17:17, what promise had God given to Abraham and Sarah that might come into play here?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Consider your own prayer life for a moment. How comfortable do you feel expressing your emotions to God? Why is this the case?

2. What can we learn from Hannah's example of pouring out her soul before God in prayer? How might her example inform your personal prayer life? How might it inform how this group prays together?

3. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that we cannot please God without faith. Talking to a God you cannot see and trusting your life into His hands certainly requires faith. How does this passage encourage you toward greater faith in God? Where does it challenge your current level of faith in Him?

4. Share one key takeaway from this portion of 1 Samuel. Why did that stand out to you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Reflect on any disappointments you are facing right now in your life. Feel free to share those with the group or pray through them privately. The psalmists regularly pour out their laments and disappointments to God. Take a moment to do that now.

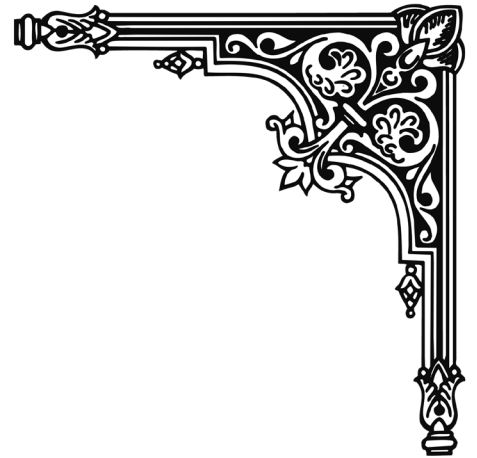
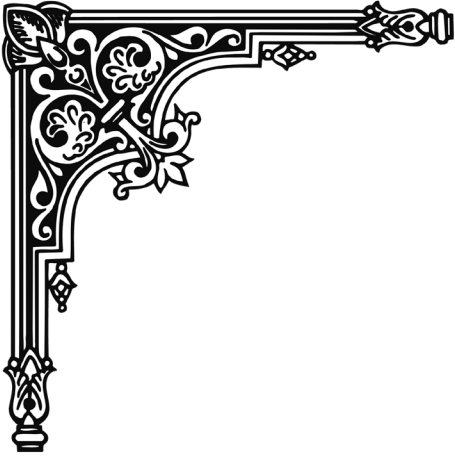
Pray for God to increase your faith in Him this semester. If you are struggling in this area, don't be afraid to pray the prayer of the father in Mark 9:24 – "I believe; help my unbelief!"

Pray for discernment this semester for those in your group. Eli lacked the discernment needed in his conversation with Hannah when she was praying. We all need spiritual discernment to walk wisely and honor the Lord with our thoughts and actions.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

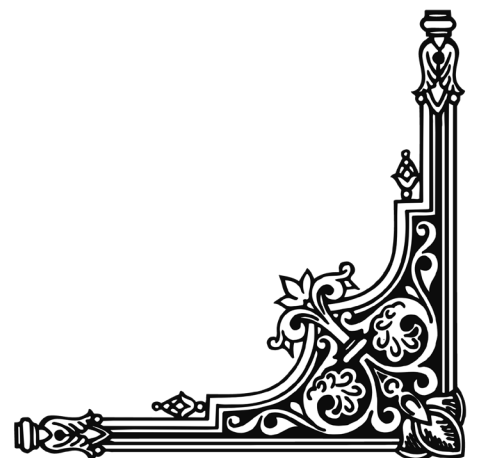
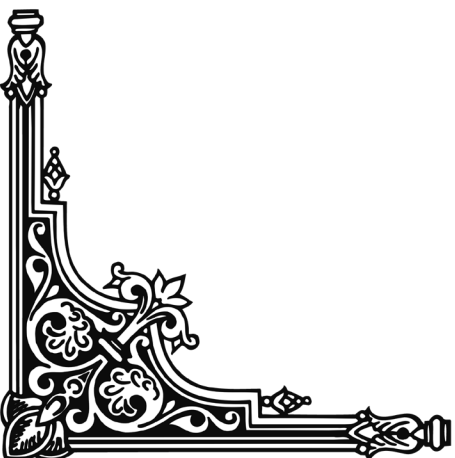
1 SAMUEL 1:1-2:11



Week 2

THE NEED FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

I Samuel 2:12-36; 3:11-18; 4:12-22



4. Why was Eli held responsible for the sins of his sons?

5. What was Eli's primary leadership failure?

6. What steps could you take to avoid similar failures in your life?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5. Why is an elder held responsible for properly leading his family?

2. How might leaders continue to responsibly guide their children as adults?

3. How does God's promise in 1 Samuel 2:35 point to Jesus? (See Hebrews 2:17.)

4. God dealt severely with Eli's sons for their flagrant abuses of sacred worship practices. What do we learn about God's view of how He is worshiped? Are we free to worship God any way we choose or should there be certain limits to today's worship practices?

5. God also takes leadership very seriously. In a few words, describe Eli as a leader. Describe his two sons as leaders. What attitudes and/or actions in their lives do not belong in ours? What attitudes/actions in their lives do not belong in the lives of today's church leaders?

6. 1 Timothy 3 describes the life and character of a pastor/elder. How much of that list focuses on ability? How much of that list focuses on intangible character matters?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

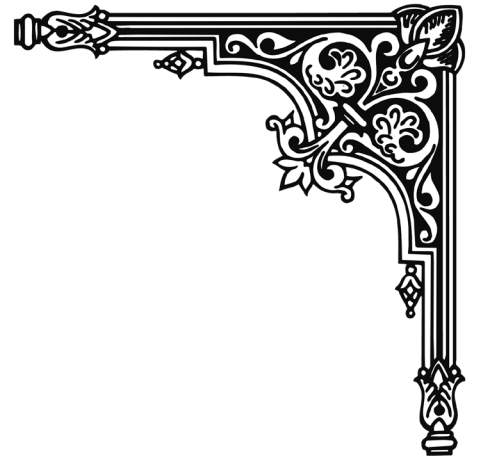
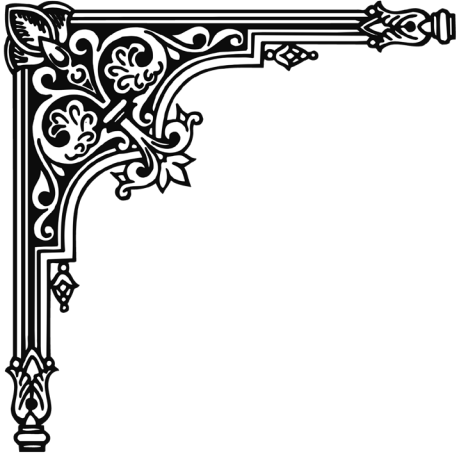
Spend a few minutes praying for those in your group – that God would prepare each person for current and future leadership roles in His Kingdom.

Spend a few minutes praying for your church's leaders. Ask God to nurture their spiritual health, prayer lives, and families. Ask for God's wisdom over their lives to make decisions and speak words of truth and love for those in their care. Pray for them to walk in holiness and integrity, that they would honor God and lead His people well.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

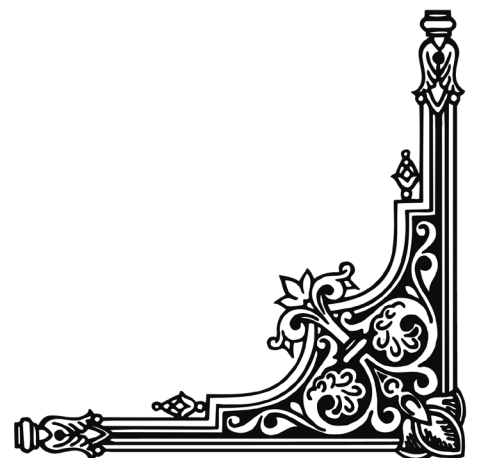
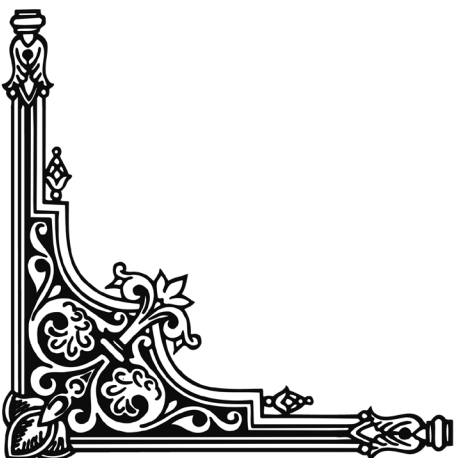
1 SAMUEL 2:12-36; 3:11-18; 4:12-22



Week 3

***REPRESENTING PEOPLE
BEFORE GOD***

1 Samuel 7:1-17



BACKGROUND

The “ark of the Lord’s covenant” was a small box designed to hold significant items associated with God’s dealing with Israel. It was made of wood and overlaid with gold. Inside were the stone tables, on which were written the Ten Commandments, Aaron’s staff that budded, and a jar of manna from Israel’s wilderness wanderings. This sacred chest was associated with God’s presence among His people (1 Samuel 4:3-7). At times, it was treated like a “good luck charm” instead of a sacred symbol. The ark was captured in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11). It remained with the Philistines for a time (Chapter 5), before being returned to Israel (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 records a time of spiritual renewal in Israel under Samuel’s leadership.

WARM UP QUESTION

Samuel sets up a memorial stone (called an Ebenezer – lit., stone of help) to remember God’s help in battle with the Philistines. Has there been a time in your life when God helped you in a powerful way to the point you would create a memorial? Share this with the group.

Reading: 1 Samuel 7:1-17

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WORD

1. What was Samuel’s challenge to the people of Israel (v. 3)?
2. Why was this step necessary in order to have God’s presence and power among them?
3. In verse 5, what did Samuel mean when he said, “I will intercede with the Lord for you”? (See also verses 8 and 9.)
4. What was Samuel’s understanding of the importance of his role in intercessory prayer? (See 12:23.)

5. What other roles did Samuel fulfill as leader of the Israelites? (See 7:3, 9, 12, and 17.)

6. How does Jesus fulfill these roles as our great High Priest? (See Hebrews 4:14-16 and 7:23-28.)

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Samuel's challenge was to abandon their idols in a spirit of repentance. Is there anything in your life that is competing for your attention and affection toward God? What changes do you need to make in keeping with Samuel's challenge?

2. What role does repentance play in experiencing God's presence and power in our lives today?

3. How would you define "intercessory prayer"? Why is it so important in the life of a church? How might it impact the work of missionaries serving around the world?

4. Has God given you the responsibility to intercede in prayer for any particular person or group of people?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of those in your group to clearly see the idols in our lives. Pray for the resolve to put away those things that compete with God for first place in our hearts.

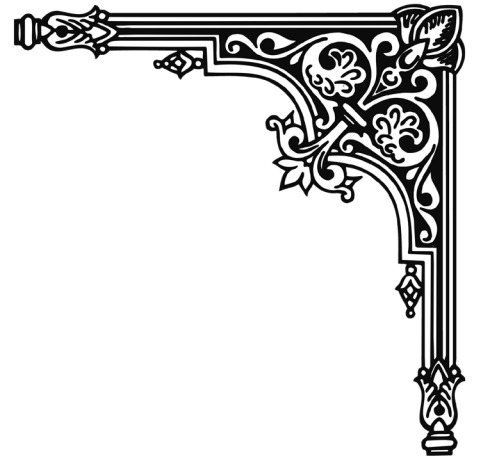
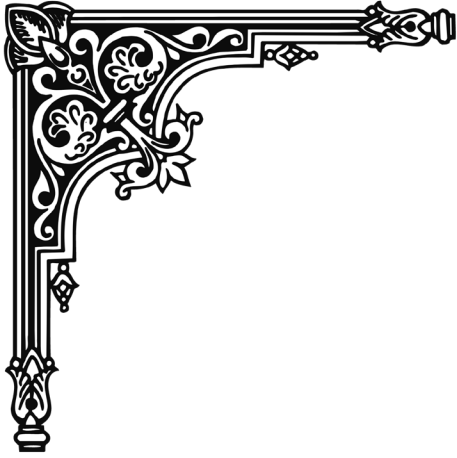
Spend the week specifically interceding for someone in your group, broader ministry, or church. Perhaps intercede for a church leader or missionary. Consider sharing with that person that you are interceding on their behalf for their encouragement.

To prepare for the next meeting, read 1 Samuel 8-13.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

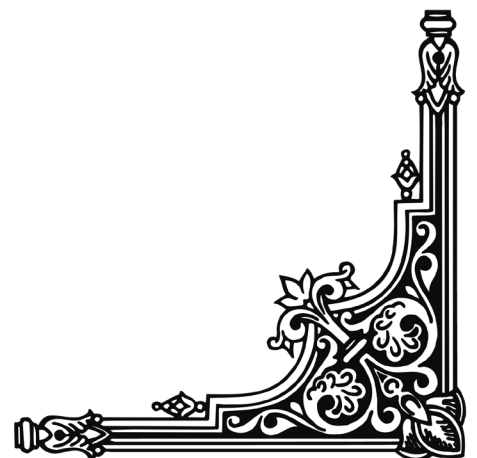
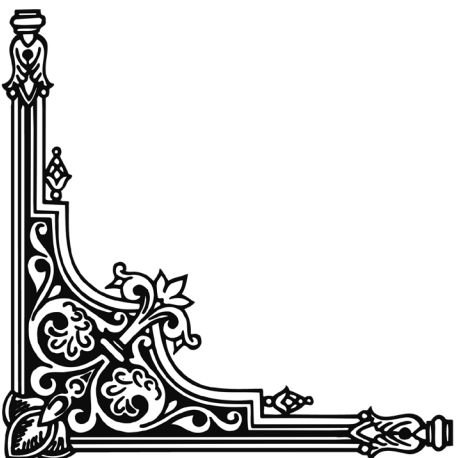
1 SAMUEL 7:1-17



Week 4

GOD'S WAY, GOD'S TIME

I Samuel 8-13



BACKGROUND

When the prophet Samuel grew old, the people of Israel asked for a king as his replacement (1 Samuel 8:6). Samuel warned the Israelites that their desire would have negative repercussions (1 Samuel 8: 9-20). Yet God told Samuel to “listen to them and give them a king” (1 Samuel 8:21). Saul, an outwardly impressive man, was chosen as the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 9:2). Samuel anointed Saul with oil as a sign of God’s anointing upon him for his kingly rule (1 Samuel 10:1).

WARM UP QUESTION

Has there been a time in your life when you were reluctant to follow what you felt to be God’s will in your life? Has there been a time when you “ran ahead of God” and rushed into a decision without thought and prayer?

Reading: 1 Samuel 8-13

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WORD

1. Israel clamored after a human king for one specific reason. What was their motive? (see 1 Samuel 8:20). What does this tell us about the spiritual state of Israel at this time?

2. The Bible records several interesting physical characteristics and personality qualities about Saul as a young man (see chapters 10-11). Note these characteristics and qualities.

3. What was Saul’s initial reaction to being chosen as king (1 Samuel 9:21)?

4. How did God confirm His choice of Saul (1 Samuel 11)?

5. 1 Samuel 13 presents Israel preparing for battle with the Philistines. What specific instruction had Samuel given Saul regarding his leadership at this time (1 Samuel 10:8)?

6. Why did Saul disobey Samuel's instruction (1 Samuel 13:8-9)? [Note: Saul was chosen as a king, not a priest, and it was not his place to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.]

7. What did Saul's actions reveal about his character?

8. What was Samuel's response to Saul's impatience and presumption (1 Samuel 13:10-14)?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. What valuable lessons could Saul have learned from the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 12:22-25)?

2. Why do you think the judgment Samuel pronounced was so severe? What does this teach us about God's view of sin?

3. Christians today don't approach God with sacrificial offerings like OT saints of the past. Why was it necessary back then? Why is it no longer necessary for believers today?

4. Why is it mandatory to approach God on His terms?

5. How does Jesus enable us to approach God directly, without fear of condemnation (Romans 8:1, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 9:22-27, and 1 Peter 3:18)?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Being a college student is somewhat like standing on the edge of the diving board, preparing to jump off into the deep end. In many ways, you are beginning the next big season of life. Ask God to help you start well – humbly, honestly, and walking in holiness before God.

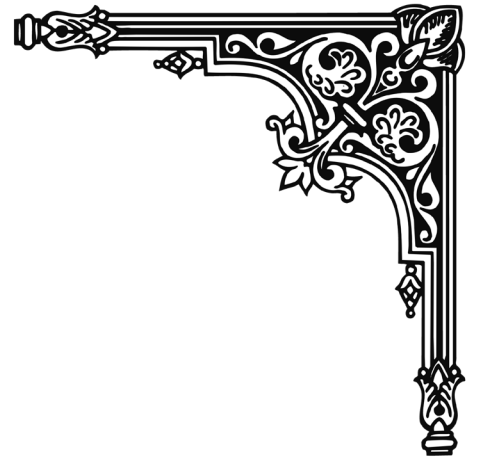
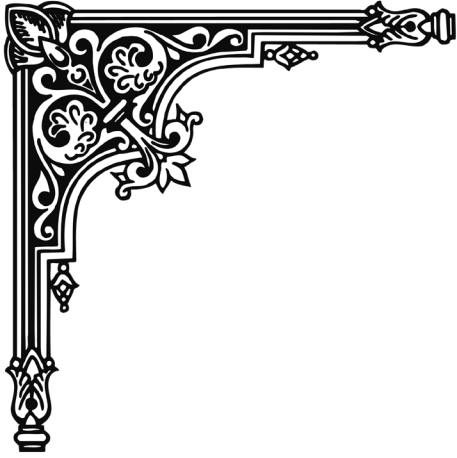
Praise God for His holy and unchanging character. This enables us to trust His promises for the future.

Take inventory of your attitude toward coming before the Lord in worship. Are there any wrong attitudes you need to confess concerning how you come to God?

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

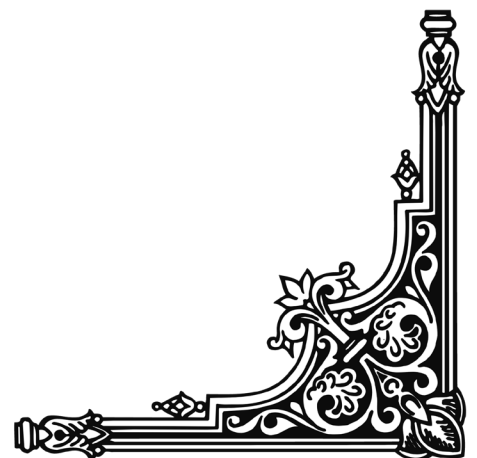
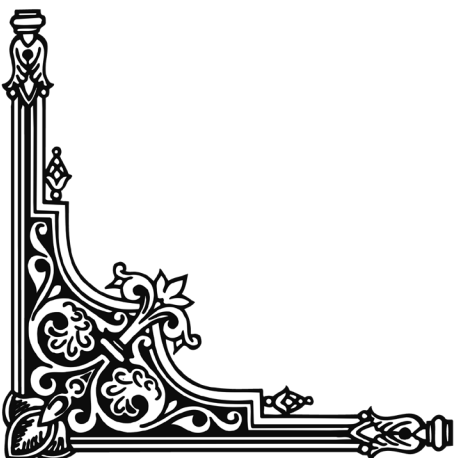
1 SAMUEL 8-13



Week 5

***HUMILITY AND
LEADERSHIP***

1 Samuel 14



5. Was Saul eager to seek God's guidance in the continued assault against the Philistines (1 Samuel 14:36)?

6. Verse 37 records that God refused to answer Saul's request for guidance. How did Saul's judgment then go "from bad to worse?"

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. How do pride, unsubmitiveness, and inflexibility show up as harmful qualities in leaders?

2. Why is humility before God and others an essential quality for spiritual leaders? How do leaders develop humility?

3. Read Philippians 2:1-8. Explain why the crucifixion of Jesus reveals the greatest act of humility in history.

4. How should these verses affect how we pray and what we should pray for?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Jonathan's humility came as a result of his great love and respect for God and His greatness. Ask for wisdom and clarity to see God as exalted and worthy of worship. Consider praying this for those in your group as well.

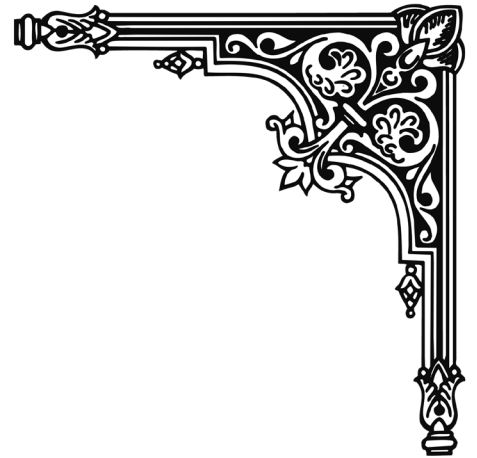
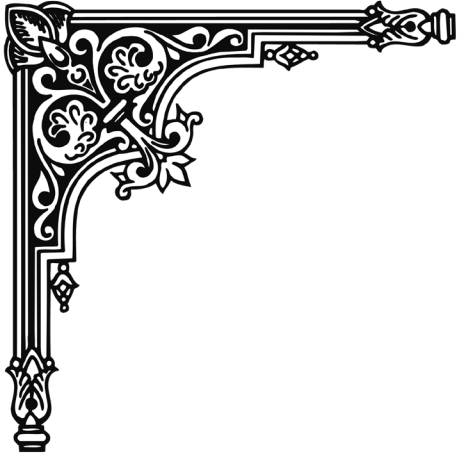
Confess any sin in your life that bears a resemblance to Saul's sin in his life (impatience, unsubmitive attitudes, pride, etc.). Consider confessing to one another, as well as to the Lord. Pray specifically for one another over these concerns.

Walking in humility means seeing ourselves in the proper light before God – not as a worthless worm and not with self-important, grandiose notions. Ask God to help you develop a biblical perspective on yourself. Ask for His help in seeing others through His eyes as well.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

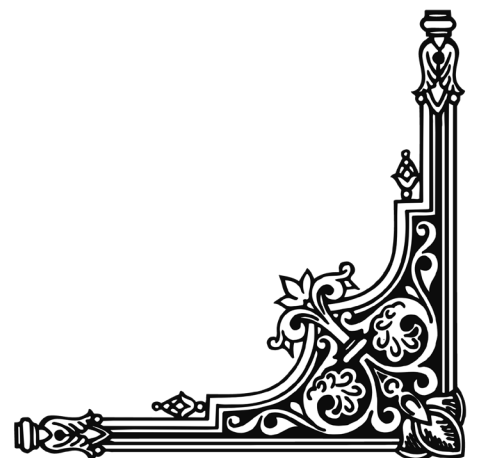
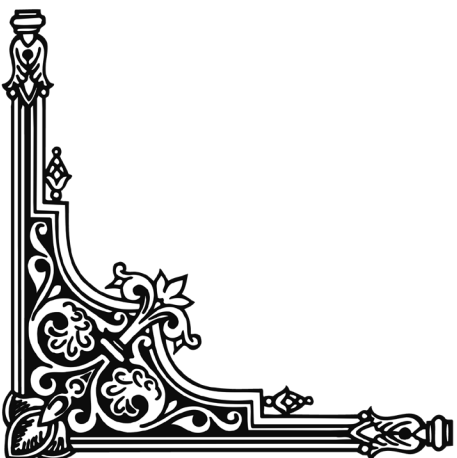
1 SAMUEL 14



Week 6

***COMPROMISE
= REBELLION***

I Samuel 15



BACKGROUND

In Chapter 15, Samuel gives Saul a command from the Lord to destroy the Amalekites. The Amalekites had been bitter enemies of the Israelites years before, attacking them during their exodus from Egypt (Exodus 17:8). God's command to Saul was to completely destroy the Amalekites, leaving none alive and taking no plunder. [Note: God alone knows when people are corrupt beyond any possibility of repentance. His sovereignty in issuing such a decree of destruction is consistent with His perfect wisdom and His perfect love.] It is important to view Scripture from a wide-angle viewpoint, as well as up close. Genesis 12:3 recalls God's promise to curse anyone who curses His people, Israel. For the Amalekites to attempt to wipe out the Jews meant that they were launching an assault on God because of His covenant commitment to Israel. As Wiersbe says, "Serving God acceptably involves doing the will of God in the right way, at the right time, and for the right motive" (Wiersbe OT Bible Commentary, 518).

WARM UP QUESTION

What is it that motivates people to make compromises? Do you think compromises happen quickly or over a period of time?

Reading: 1 Samuel 15

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Why did Saul not obey God's mandate?
2. What was Saul's response when confronted by Samuel (15:13)? What was Saul's excuse?
3. What leadership weakness does Saul's excuse reveal?
4. Do you think Saul really believed he had obeyed God? Why or why not?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

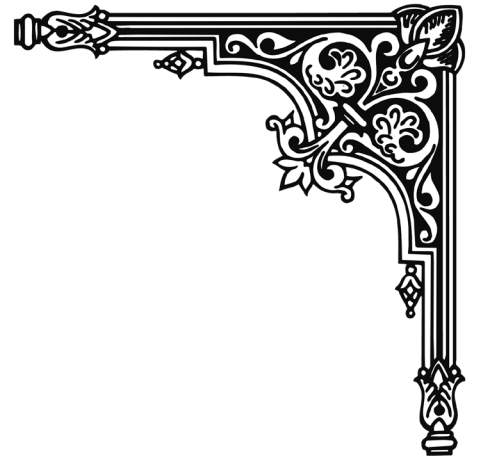
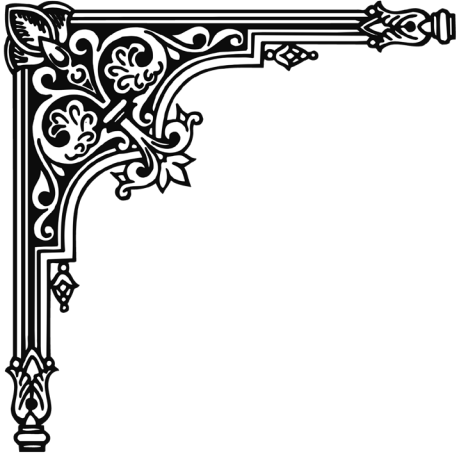
Ask God to give you an undivided heart that you would fear God and fully obey His Word (Ps. 86:11). Pray this for the leaders in your life (parents, professors, small group leaders, employers, pastors, mentors).

Pray against our fleshly tendency to draw attention to ourselves and make much of God. Ask for the kind of heart and attitude that desires to imitate Jesus, who set aside the praise of man to give glory to God.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

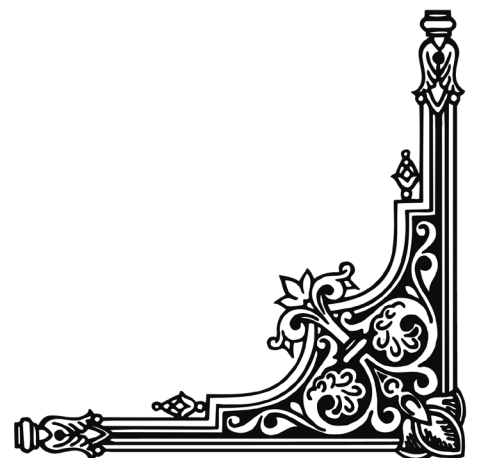
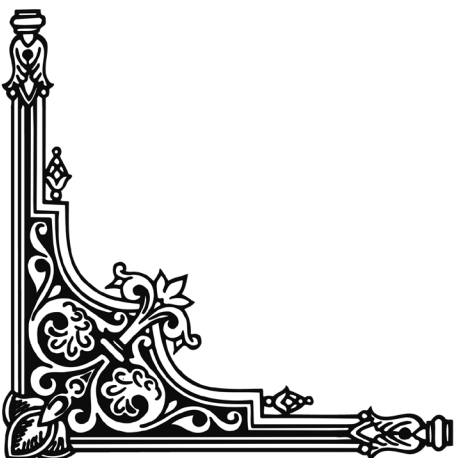
1 SAMUEL 15



Week 7

***THE LEADER WHO
TRUSTS GOD***

I Samuel 17



4. Compare vv. 38-40 with v. 47. What differences do you notice in Saul and David's choice of armor/weaponry? What might that suggest about where the two men had placed their trust?

5. What is the significance of David's reliance upon "the name of the Lord Almighty" (17:45)?

6. What qualities do you see in David's life that point to his becoming a better leader for God's people than Saul?

7. Choose the statement below that you think best states the spiritual truth seen in the account of David's battle with Goliath:

a. If a person has adequate faith in God, he or she will win every battle in life.

b. God often magnifies His name by empowering the weak who place their trust in Him.

Explain why you chose the answer you did.

8. Are there any Scriptural cross-references that support your choice? If so, make a note of those here:

9. Read Hebrews 11:32-40. How does this passage help you understand God's extraordinary work through ordinary people? What is the "better" thing God planned for us (v. 40)?

10. Is there a situation in your life to which you could apply some spiritual truth from 1 Samuel 17 or Hebrews 11? Briefly describe the situation and the spiritual truth that might relate to your need(s).

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

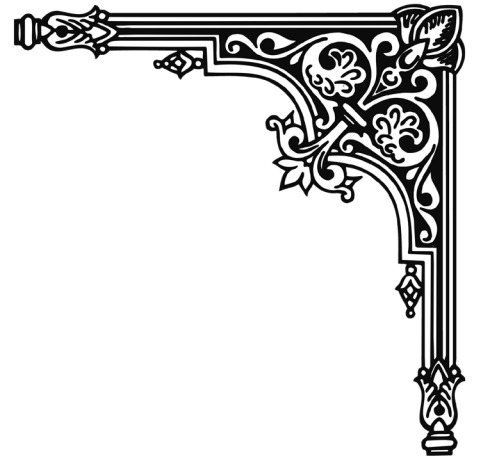
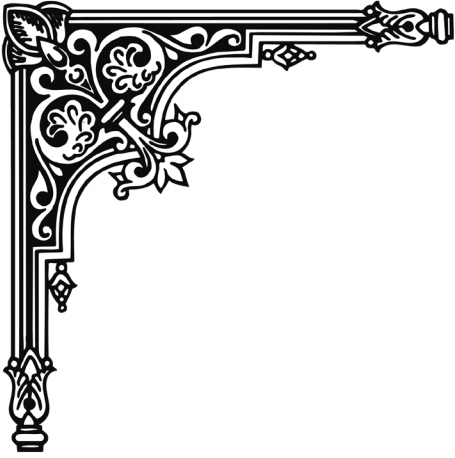
Ask God to show you an area in your life where you find it difficult to trust Him. Spend a moment confessing your lack of trust to God. Like the man in Mark 9:24, feel free to ask God to "help you in your unbelief." Hebrews 4:14-16 affirms that we have a High Priest in Jesus who understands our weaknesses and invites us to come to Him for help in spite of those weaknesses.

Give thanks for God's willingness to do extraordinary things with ordinary people. Call out to God concerning any situations in your life (a lost roommate/parent/classmate, a difficult work environment, etc.) that seem beyond you. Pray for Him to work His will, in His way, in that situation. Ask for a heart to believe and eyes of faith to see God's hand at work in those places.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

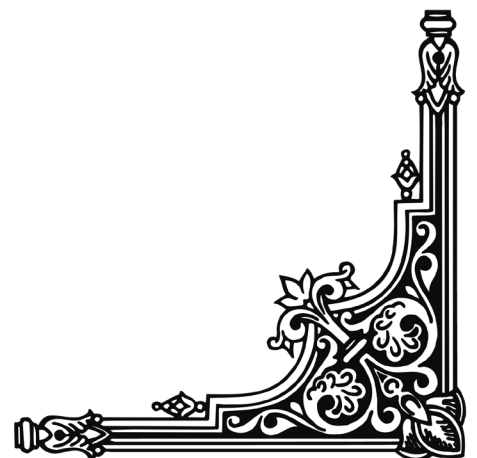
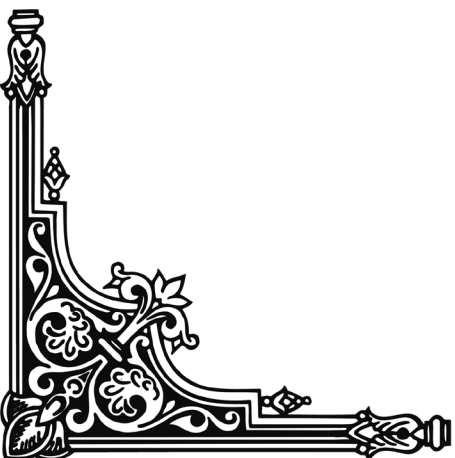
1 SAMUEL 17



Week 8

WHY LEADERS FALL

I Samuel 18-19, and 28



BACKGROUND

After Samuel pronounced God's rejection of Saul (13:14), the rejected king's behavior got even worse. His impatience and unsubmitiveness became outright rebellion against God (15:23). In Chapter 16, we are told that "the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him" (v. 14). Saul's rebellion had resulted in God's withdrawal of His Holy Spirit. The Lord then allowed Saul to reap the consequences of his rebelliousness by allowing an evil spirit to afflict him. In God's mercy, Saul would find relief when David would play his harp for him (16:23). Later, Saul's insane jealousy would drive him to try to kill David (18:10-11).

WARM UP QUESTION

What activities, habits, or places bring you relief when you are anxious or distressed?

Reading: 1 Samuel 18-19, and 28

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. What specific sin was at the root of Saul's hatred of David (18:6-9)?
2. Observe David's humility when offered the opportunity to marry Saul's daughter (18:18, 23). Note that David's humble assessment of himself came after he had killed Goliath (Chapter 17) and had experienced much military success (18:5). Why is a humble assessment of oneself important for those God uses in leadership?
3. According to 18:20-25, what outrageous action did Saul take in order to bring David down?
4. According to 18:28-29, two things led to Saul becoming afraid of David, making him David's perpetual enemy. Make a note of both.

5. Why are pride and jealousy so destructive in leadership?

6. Saul's lack of fitness as a leader is again seen in Chapter 28. In accord with God's law (Exodus 22:18), Saul had expelled all mediums and sorcerers from Israel. Yet when Saul was unable to get guidance from God, he sought guidance from a medium (someone claiming to be in contact with the spirits of the dead). What do we learn about Saul's spiritual condition at this point in his life (specifically, his trust in God)?

7. What connection is there between Saul's behavior and Samuel's statement in 15:23?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Saul's demise as a leader might be depicted in these steps:

Pride -> insubordination -> disobedience ->

jealousy -> manipulation -> witchcraft -> death

Perhaps Saul would have never imagined his life going the direction it did. If you were able to call a "Timeout!" in Saul's life to give him counsel, where/when would you have called it, and what counsel would you have given?

2. Why is it so important that a leader knows how to submit to authority?

3. Why must a leader be able to recognize a bad decision, accept responsibility for it, apologize, and change course?

4. How did irrational and self-preservation type fears lead to Saul's downfall? Do any of these fears exist in your own heart? Confess those to the Lord and turn from them in a spirit of repentance.

5. What happens when a leader allows others to excel in leadership?

6. List several ways that Jesus modeled the right way to lead others.

7. Why is it so important for a Christian leader to be secure in God's love before becoming a leader in the church?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Consider making this prayer your own, and offer it to God. "Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy thought can drag down; an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; an upright heart that, which no unworthy purpose can tempt aside. Bestow upon me understanding to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, and faithfulness...[to] embrace you." Amen.

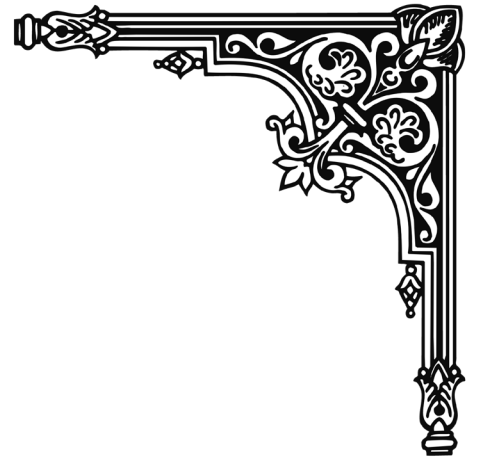
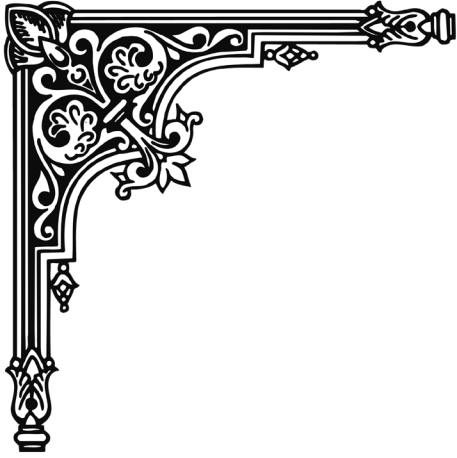
Pray against the enemy's undermining activity in the lives of your group members. Ask for the Spirit to guard your hearts and minds in Christ, that you would exemplify the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and not the works of the flesh as seen in Saul's life.

Pray for God to raise up leaders from within College Connection, Alliance Bible Fellowship, and throughout His Church. Ask God for those leaders to be the kind of leaders that help others grow, learn, and lead like God would have them to do. Pray against any forms of jealousy among God's servants in His Church.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

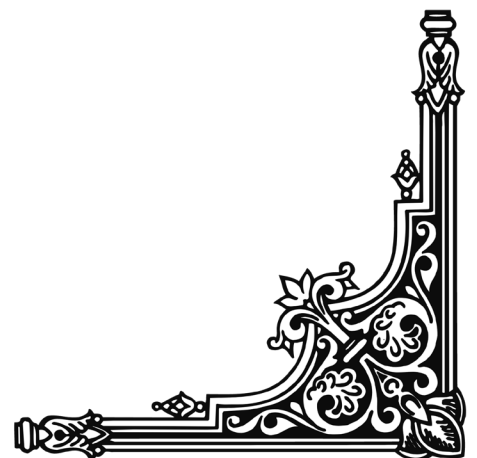
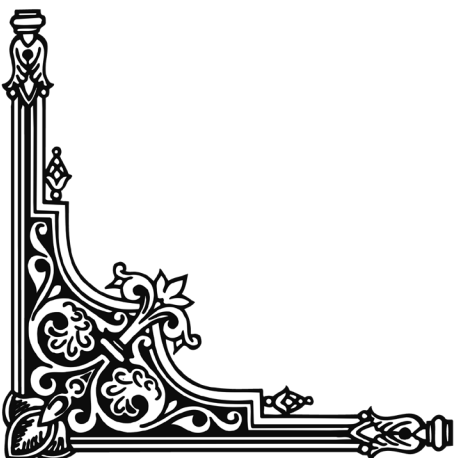
1 SAMUEL 18-19, AND 28



Week 9

THE SUFFERING OF A LEADER

1 Samuel 19; Psalm 59



BACKGROUND

Chapter 19 of 1 Samuel records David fleeing for his life from King Saul. As we study this chapter, we will also study Psalm 59. This psalm is one of fourteen psalms that includes a historical note in its heading. These notes reveal the circumstances of David's life out of which the psalms were written. (Note: Some online versions do not include the headings with psalms. Be sure to get a version that contains these headings. They are part of the original Hebrew text and should be considered Scripture.) The heading of Psalm 59 includes these words: "When Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him." We can clearly connect this psalm to 1 Samuel 19:11, which reads: "Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning." Having such a clear connection between a psalm and a narrative passage is a great help in interpreting and applying Scripture.

WARM UP QUESTION

Share the name of a friend God has placed in your life. In what specific ways has that friend blessed your life?

Reading: 1 Samuel 19; Psalm 59

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. God providentially supplied a brother and friend for David in Saul's own son, Jonathan. List some of the things Jonathan reminded his father about concerning David.

2. When Jonathan persuaded his father, Saul, not to kill David, Saul took an oath to that effect (1 Samuel 19:6). Note the events recorded in verse 8. Do you think they had anything to do with Saul's violation of his oath? Why or why not?

3. In verse 9, we are told that "an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul." (See also 1 Samuel 16:14, 23, and 18:10.) Though difficult to understand, we can assume this means that God allowed an evil spirit to torment Saul. Why do you think God's judgment on Saul was so severe?

4. Saul's treatment of David during this time in his life was a vicious cycle of peace-then-conflict. Note David's responses to Saul's unrighteous attacks on his life. Do you see any foreshadowing of Christ's responses in David's? Jot these similarities down.

5. Turn to Psalm 59. The heading of the psalm tells us David intended it to be set to music. Why might David have wanted these words to be put into song?

6. Where in this psalm does David remind himself (and us) who God is? Note the verse number(s) and how God is described there.

7. What do we learn about David from his prayer in verse 1?

8. What does David mean in Psalm 59:9 when he says to God, "I will watch for you...?"

9. What qualities does David ascribe to God in verses 16 and 17?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Why do you think David ends the psalm with an emphasis on singing praise to God? What effect does praise have upon our hearts and minds?

2. How does God use suffering to produce godly leaders? Why are some qualities only gained through enduring periods of suffering?

3. Is there a song of the faith that is dear to your heart right now? Why or why not?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

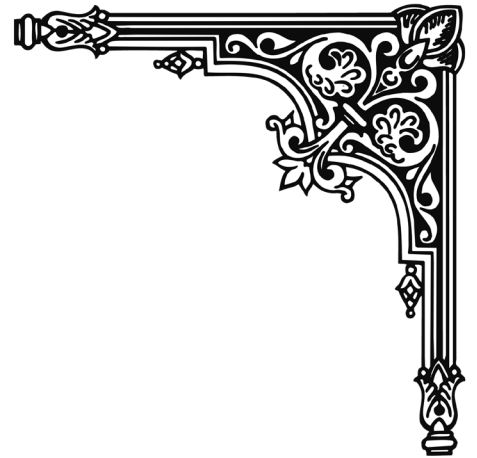
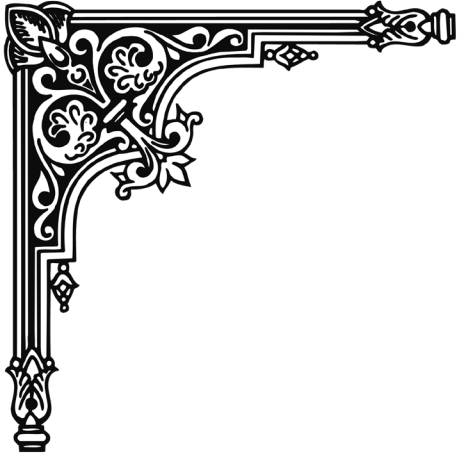
Christians (and Christian missionaries) face attacks daily around the world for their faith in Christ. Pray for protection from these assaults and increased boldness for those being persecuted.

Ask God for a “watchful spirit” similar to what David described in Psalm 59:9 (i.e., having eyes of faith and a heart set on God in the face of the enemy’s attacks).

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

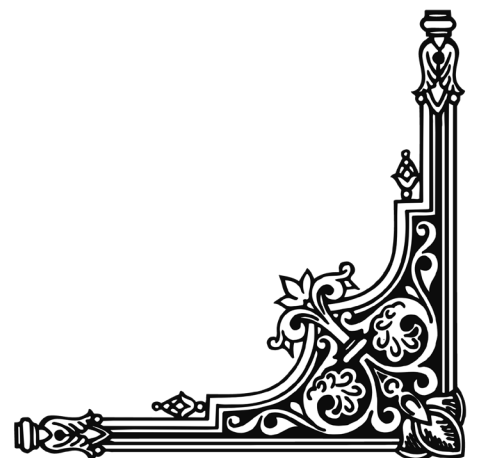
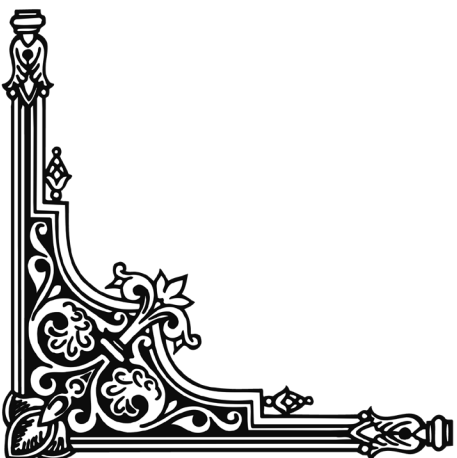
1 SAMUEL 19; PSALM 59



Week 10

LEADERSHIP GROWTH THROUGH HARDSHIP

1 Samuel 21:1-22:5; Psalm 34, 56



BACKGROUND

Chapters 21-29 mark a period of exile in David's life that lasted about ten years. Understandably so, this was a tremendously trying period of David's life. Even though he experienced great success militarily and enjoyed the support of the people around him, David was still a fugitive from a sin-saddled King who had gone mad from jealousy and constant strife. Interestingly, David penned a number of psalms during this period of his life, to include Psalm 7, 11-13, 16-17, 22, 25, 31, 34-35, 52-54, 56-59, 63-64, 142-143 (Adapted from Wiersbe OT commentary on 1 Samuel, "Be Successful," 133.)

In David's desperation to escape Saul, he fled to the Philistine city of Gath. Gath was the hometown of Goliath, the Philistine giant whom David had killed. Moreover, the sword David carried on his flight was the unique sword he had taken from Goliath (1 Samuel 21:9). Why would David flee to Gath? Perhaps he reasoned that Saul would never think to look for him there!

David soon realized the risk he had taken by going to Gath. The servants of Achish, King of Gath, warned the king about David (1 Samuel 21:11). In his fear, David pretended to be insane, hoping that Achish would dismiss him as a harmless madman. He left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1). 400 fighting men who were disgruntled with Saul's leadership and saw God's anointing over David's life joined him there.

David was moved by the Holy Spirit to write both Psalm 34 and Psalm 56 in response to the events of 1 Samuel 21. Both psalms reveal David's fear, but also his trust in God. They also teach us how we can draw closer to God and grow stronger in faith during the hardest times of our lives.

WARM UP QUESTION

When you were little and afraid of the dark (or monsters in the closet, etc.), how did you deal with your fear? (a favorite toy, blanket, etc.)

Reading: 1 Samuel 21:1-22:5; Psalm 34, 56

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. Considering the environment in which David wrote Psalm 34, why is his high praise of God here significant?

2. When David shows up at Nob (21:1), Ahimelech gave him the bread that was to be eaten by the priests alone. Technically, this was a "no-no" for both Ahimelech to do and for David and his men to partake. However, Jesus alludes to this scene in Luke 6:2-5. Read Jesus' explanation of David's situation and summarize Jesus' support of David's actions in that situation.

3. This stretch of David's life as a fugitive was humiliating and exhausting. Observe the remarks that Achish (king of Gath) made about David, the mighty warrior, now miserable runaway. List those comments here.

4. Compare Psalm 34:20 with John 19:31-37. What connection do you observe between those two passages? Why would the Holy Spirit inspire David to write the unusual words found in Psalm 34:20?

5. See Psalm 56. How has David learned to deal with his fear?

6. In the face of very real threats, why does David say, "What can mortal man do to me" (verse 4; also verse 11)? How is this idea lived out in Jesus' life as He faced the Cross?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. What specific lessons do this week's passages teach us about trusting God during a crisis?

2. What does the psalm reveal about God's concern for His suffering children?

3. What is the greatest lesson you have ever learned through hardship? Has this made you a better spiritual leader? How?

4. Can righteous people expect to have fewer troubles in life? Why or why not?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

We all have people in our lives who have hurt us – perhaps some continually, as Saul attempted to do with David. Pray for a willing spirit to forgive those people who have hurt you in the past, or perhaps even now.

Pray for the friends God has placed in your life. During our times of seeming exile, those folks who rally to us are a true blessing amidst the burdens we sometimes face. Give thanks for those friends; pray for their personal growth and flourishing in every area of life.

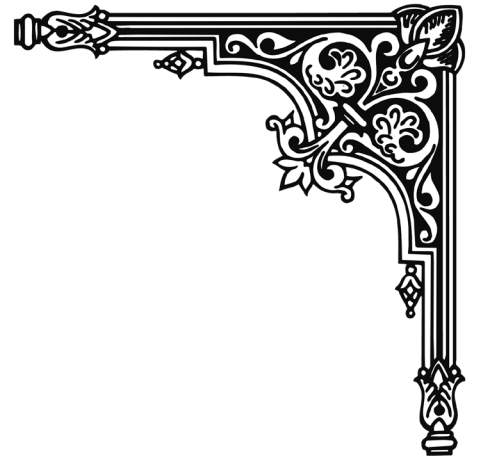
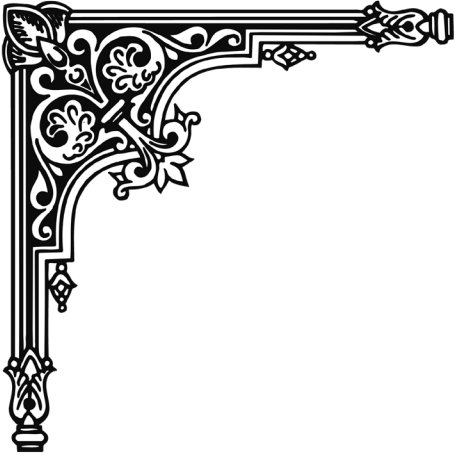
Pray for the hearts of those in your group – that each person would be confident in God even in trying times; that each person would grow in faith during these periods of life; and that

Twice in Psalm 56, David mentions “...God, whose word I praise...” Praise God for His words to us in Scripture! His Word is life-giving and soul-satisfying.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

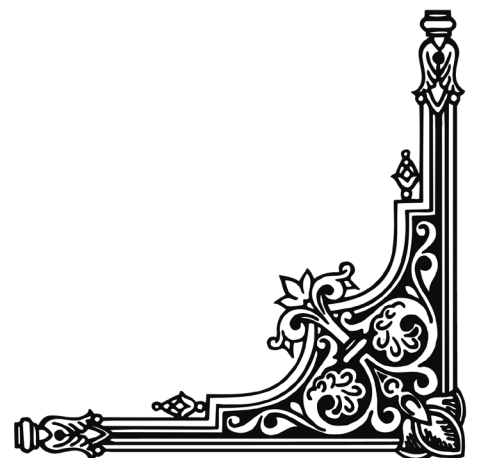
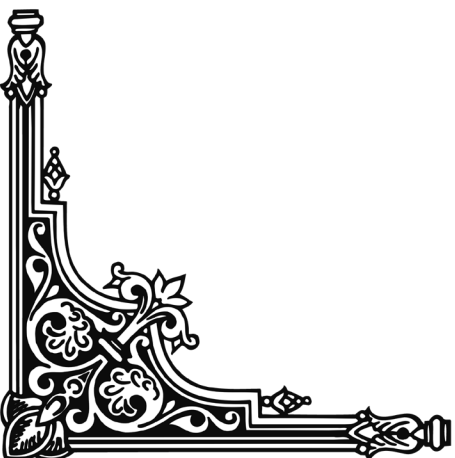
1 SAMUEL 21:1-22:5; PSALM 34, 56



Week II

***THE LEADER WHO
WAITS ON GOD'S TIME***

I Samuel 24 and 26



4. When David passed up a second opportunity to take Saul's life (1 Samuel 26:8-11), what reasons did he give for his restraint?

5. Compare David's actions with Jesus' response to persecution mentioned in 1 Peter 2:21-23. What does the text say concerning Jesus' response when He was insulted?

6. In the Lord's prayer, "deliver us from evil" may also be translated "deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13). The devil makes plans; he has evil "schemes" (Ephesians 6:11). How does it change your understanding of temptation in your life and terror in the world if you think in terms of a personal enemy instead of an impersonal evil—like the dark side of the force in Star Wars?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Do you find it difficult to leave matters of justice in God's hands? Are you facing any situations that seem unfair in which you have to trust God for the outcome? How is that going?

2. Describe a time in your life when you really lived like the Lord was your defender? What was the outcome? What did you learn from that experience?

3. David's respect for authority and for God's timing allowed him to forgive Saul, even to the point of sparing his life twice. How would you characterize your own attitude toward authority? What steps could you take to grow in this area over the next month?

4. Why are we so often in a hurry when it is evident that God is not?

5. What should be our attitude when waiting on God to bring about His plan for our lives?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Consider making this prayer your own, and offer it to God. "O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

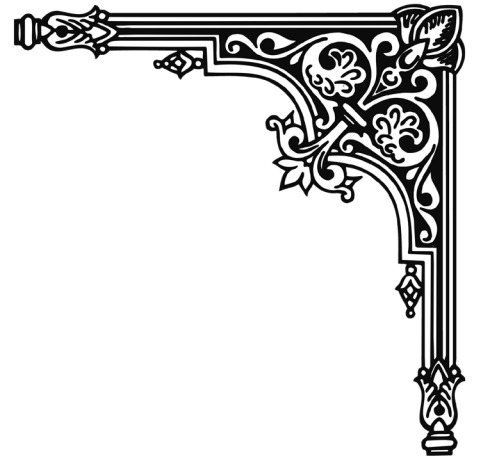
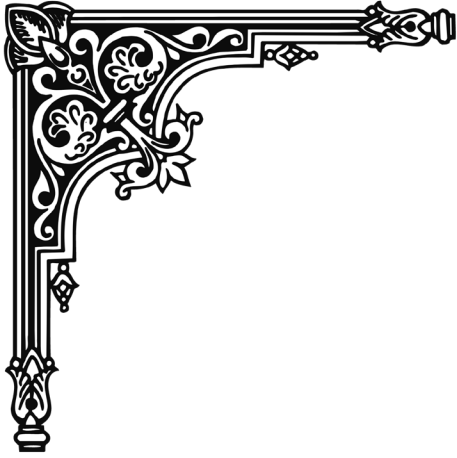
Pray for those in authority – that they would be surrendered to God with hearts ready to do His will.

Pray for followers of Jesus – that as we live in a society that is unfriendly to the cause of Christ, we would be patient amidst persecution and trust in God's timing.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

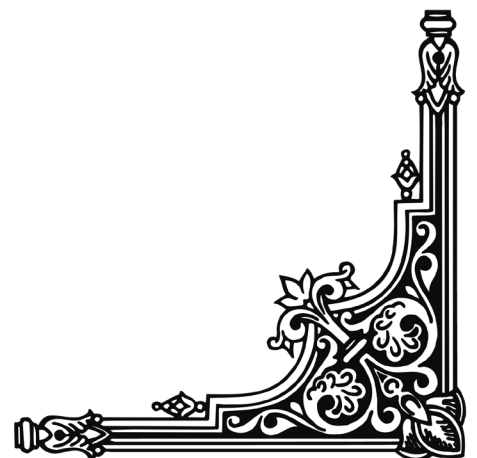
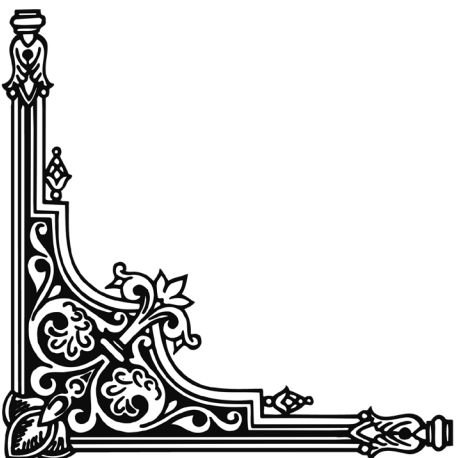
1 SAMUEL 24 AND 26



Week 12

***ABIGAIL — A PORTRAIT
OF A WISE LEADER***

1 Samuel 25



BACKGROUND

In 1 Samuel 25, we find David and his roving band of warriors in the Desert of Maon. There was a wealthy man named Nabal who lived there. David and his men could easily have stolen all of the sheep they wanted from Nabal. Instead, they treated Nabal's herders and sheep shearers well, and even protected them (v. 16). So when David made a request for provisions from Nabal, it was natural to expect Nabal to respond favorably.

But Nabal was not a wise man. The Hebrew meaning of his name is "fool," and our passage describes him as "surly and mean" (v. 3). Nabal scorned David's request and insulted David and his men. When David's messengers returned with Nabal's response, David's reaction was swift and decisive: "Put on your swords!" (v. 13) David and his men would have shed much blood if it had not been for the intervention of a very wise woman: Abigail, Nabal's wife. Her bold actions prevented the bloodshed and kept David from unwise actions.

WARM UP QUESTION

What does your name mean? Do you think it fits you?

Reading: 1 Samuel 25

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. What was Nabal's view of his possessions (v. 11)? How was his viewpoint consistent with his name?
2. Was David unwise in his declaration in verses 21 and 22? Why or why not?
3. See verses 23 and 24. Abigail took a big risk in what she did. What good leadership qualities do you see in her?
4. Note Abigail's beautiful words in verses 28-31. How could she have known to say these things?

5. Note how God is credited with restraining David from wrongdoing in verses 26, 34, and 39. Also note that He used Abigail to do that (v. 33). Why are we in need of God's restraining work in our lives? How can we better cooperate with His restraining work? (See Matthew 6:13.)

6. Why did David realize it would have been wrong for him to kill Nabal (v. 39)?

7. Why did God sometimes allow, and even direct, Saul and David to attack and kill people? Is this a contradiction with His commandment in Exodus 20:13? Why or why not?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. When you face a conflict with a difficult person, what is your typical response? What can you personally learn from Abigail's example?

2. Has there been a time in your life when someone else stopped you from making a reckless decision? Is there someone in your life for whom you could do the same?

3. What character weaknesses do you see in Nabal that surface in your own life from time to time? What steps can you take to change those with the help of the Spirit this week?

4. Abigail was in a tight spot – caught between helping/guiding the king and her own commitment to her husband. Consider James 3:13-18, which talks about “wisdom from above.” Do you or someone in your life need God’s wisdom right now to navigate a difficult situation? Ask for God’s wisdom in the spirit of James 1.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Confess any sinful, rash tendencies in your life that reflect Nabal’s sort of character. Ask God for wisdom and guidance to change these patterns in your life.

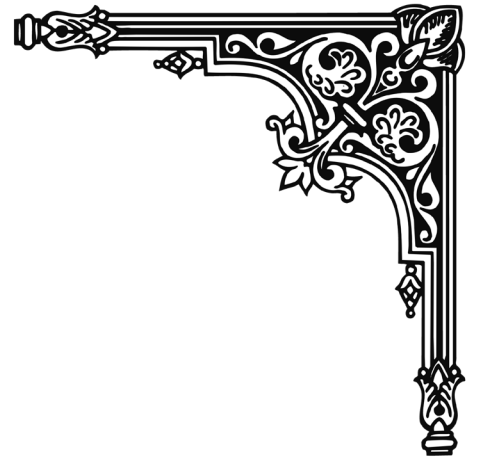
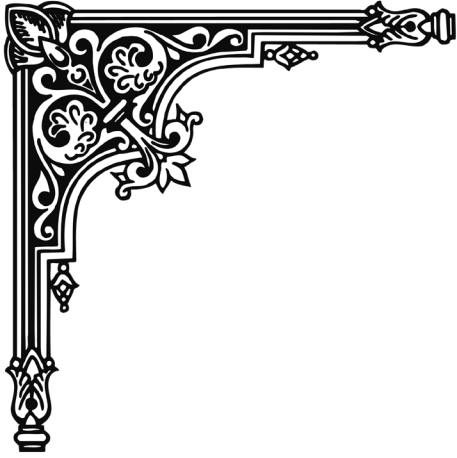
Praise God for the “Abigails” in your life who have stood in your way of making poor decisions. Consider thanking God for them by name and praying God’s blessings over their lives for their ministry in your life.

Are there any decisions you are currently facing that require God’s wisdom from above? List those and spend a moment seeking God’s heart on those pressing issues.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

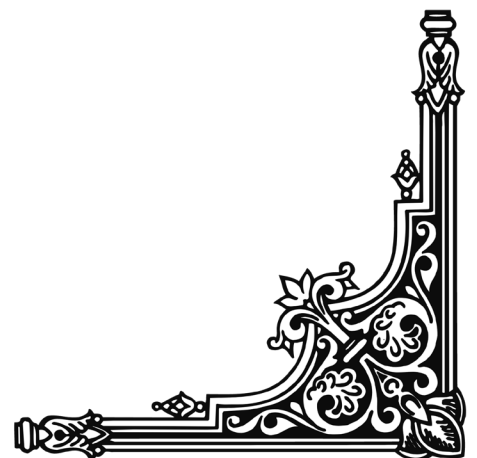
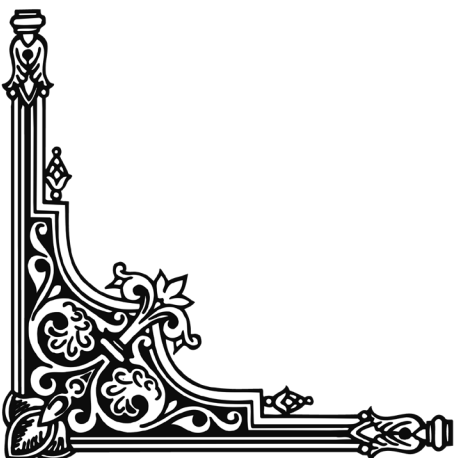
1 SAMUEL 25



Week 13

***WHEN LEADERS FACE
DISCOURAGEMENT***

I Samuel 30-31



BACKGROUND

1 Samuel 27 records that David allied himself, along with his soldiers, to Achish, king of Gath. The Philistine king trusted David and gave him the city of Ziklag, where David and his men lived for a year and four months (vv. 6-7).

When Achish and the Philistines prepared to engage Israel in battle (see Chapter 29), David and his men followed Achish. The Philistine commanders were angry with Achish for allowing David to join them, fearing he would turn against them in the heat of battle. Achish sent David and his men back to Ziklag.

On returning to Ziklag, David and his men were met with tragedy. The Amalekites had raided Ziklag, burned the city, and taken all of the women and children as captives. Bitter and discouraged, David's own men placed the blame on their leader and spoke of stoning David. This must surely have been one of the lowest low points of David's life.

WARM UP QUESTION

Do you have a favorite quote, Bible verse, mental image, or helpful thought that enables you to face times of adversity or discouragement? Share that with the group.

Reading: 1 Samuel 30-31

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. What do you think David did to find strength in God (v. 6) at this time of crisis? What would you do if faced with such a hopeless situation?

2. How did David treat the Egyptian servant who had been left for dead (v. 11-15)? Compare David's treatment of his enemies with Saul's treatment of his own men (i.e., David to be specific). What character qualities does this reveal in David? How do David's actions reflect the heart and character of Christ in the NT?

3. Note that David sought direction from the Lord in the crisis (vv. 7-8). Why do you think David still trusted God to guide him despite all of the loss he had experienced?

4. David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken (vv. 18-19). Why was David able to be generous with the men who were too weary to help in the rescue mission (vv. 21-25)? (i.e. What belief gave rise to his graciousness?) What leadership qualities are seen in David through this decision?

5. While King Saul started well, it is plain from Scripture that he ended very poorly. All manner of sinful motives and actions were present in his life. How would you describe/summarize the events of Saul's life from his anointing to his death? What critical leadership mistakes did he make along the way?

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

1. Consider all that transpired in David's life from the time of his anointing to be king (1 Samuel 16) to now. Why do you think God allowed so much adversity in David's life before he reigned as king in Israel?

2. Read Jesus' words in John 14:23-27. How does the Holy Spirit encourage us in times of discouragement? Can you share an instance when the Holy Spirit strengthened you with His encouragement during a hard time?

3. How does adversity shape our character? How does God use it to prepare us for future opportunities to serve Him?

4. Consider all the discouragement David faced in the second half of this book. What are some specific ways that God uses discouragement to shape a Christian for more effective leadership in God's kingdom?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Pray for those in your church who may be facing discouragement at this time. It might be pastors, leaders, missionaries, various volunteers throughout the church, etc. Ask God to comfort them and bring peace to their hearts and minds as they walk through the valley.

Ask God to give those in your group the kind of compassion and generosity that David modeled in 1 Sam. 30. Is there someone in your path that needs a touch of compassion or generosity this week? Ask God for the spiritual eyesight to see those opportunities and be the hands and feet of Christ this week.

Without naming anyone specifically, is there someone you feel led to pray for who seems to be heading in a wrong direction? Bring this person and his/her needs before the Lord now.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

1 SAMUEL 30-31

SUMMARY QUESTIONS FROM 1 SAMUEL STUDY

1. Based on your study of 1 Samuel, what would you say is the most important quality for a Christian leader? Why? How is that quality seen in Jesus?
2. Share the most important leadership lesson you have learned from 1 Samuel. How can this lesson be applied in your life?
3. Why must a person be submitted to spiritual authority in order to be effective in Christian leadership? (Read Luke 7:1-10 before answering.)
4. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Why are the qualifications for the office of elder and deacon so high? Why is it important to properly manage your own family before exercising leadership in the church?
5. Why must a person be willing to be “stretched” to be a leader of God’s people? How might God want to stretch you?
6. Take time to pray for each person in your group about leadership growth and any leadership opportunities that God may have in store.

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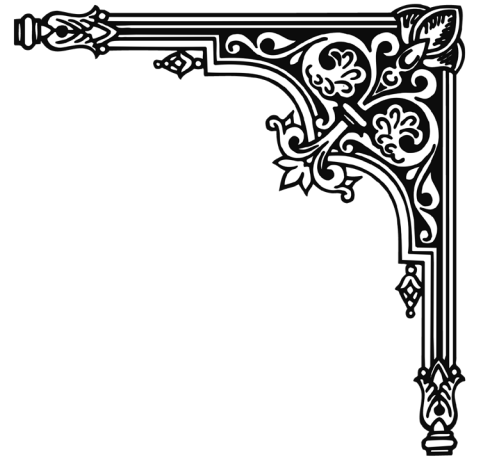
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