

### Monday, April 8, 2019—2 Samuel 16-18

Choices have consequences. David had chosen poorly in a number of occasions with his sons, and he was facing dire consequences. Absalom had wrested the kingdom from him, so David was leaving Jerusalem in order to avoid a battle. Shimei took the opportunity to curse David, saying this was a result of David's stealing the throne from Saul (16:5-8). This could not have been further from the truth, yet David took no vengeance on Shimei. He was content allowing God to be judge.

David's trust in God was sound. God was working through Ahithophel and Hushai to give conflicting advice to Absalom. He was establishing himself as king and sully his father's name before the people of Jerusalem, yet God was unraveling his control without his knowing. God was also working to provide critical insight and necessary provision along the way as David escaped the army of Absalom (17:1-29). David's choice to trust Yahweh was saving his life and his future. Absalom's choice to trust himself and his desires was sowing seeds of his own destruction.

David listened to his military advisers as well. They urged him not to go into battle. As a result, he was not in the battle that took his son's life. Absalom was in the thick of it. His involvement in battle and his long hair, of which he was so proud, led to his death.

Thank God for His great wisdom. Pray for daily deliveries of His wisdom by His Spirit for His glory and your blessing.

### Sunday, April 7, 2019—2 Samuel 13-15

Love is a word that almost everyone uses, but the meaning behind the word varies widely. David's son Amnon felt intense love for his half-sister Tamar, but his actions toward her prove his definition would have been lacking. He was passionate indeed, but he was filled with lust, not love. When he fulfilled his selfish desires, he had no interest in her any longer. He hated her (13:15). When sin fully develops, the result is death.

This hate stirred inside Absalom as well. He was able to control his

passions for two years (13:23) until he was able to be alone with Amnon. Then, he devised a plan where he and his brothers killed Amnon, and they fled. Absalom was away with his grandfather for three years.

If someone had asked David, he would likely have said without hesitation that he loved his sons. His lack of response to Amnon's rape of Tamar and Absalom's murder of Amnon reveal his love was not mature. Love, especially in a parent, makes hard decisions, requires growth and accountability, and is without condition. David was beloved by his country and feared by foreign armies, but he did not demonstrate the courage and attentiveness he needed in dealing with his sinful sons.

As a result, Absalom continued to act out. He burned Joab's field, and he took his father's throne. Sin unchecked grows cancerous, and the only answer is radical removal. One wonders whether Absalom's rebellion might have been avoided if someone had held him accountable for his sin.

Pray for repentance of personal sin and love to confront others.

Saturday, April 6, 2019—2 Samuel 9-12

Grace is receiving what we don't deserve. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve. Mephibosheth was crippled by an accident during his infancy, so he was vulnerable like few others. Saul was his grandfather, so he was a part of a tainted legacy. Society saw little worth in him.

King David overlooked all of this and brought Mephibosheth into his home and treated him as one of his own. He had promised Jonathan to care for his family, and he had seen God lavish him himself with grace and mercy, so he willingly did the same for Mephibosheth.

David attempted to express mercy to the Ammonites after the death of their king. His expression was taken as a threat rather than as sympathy, and the people of Ammon hired the Arameans to fight with them. David's troops won handily. Expressing grace and mercy is a good and right action, but not everyone understands or receives it well.

Despite his humility before God and effectiveness as king, David was no

perfect. When he should have been leading his troops, he was committing adultery. When he couldn't cover up his sin, he organized Uriah's murder (11:1-25). David's flesh had blinded him to the beauty and sufficiency of God, and God was not pleased. Nathan told David he would face severe consequences because of it (12:10-11).

The grace and mercy of God allowed David to go worship (12:20) after he learned his son had died. Pray for an awareness of God's grace and mercy that moves you to worship and to extend them to others.

#### Friday, April 5, 2019—2 Samuel 5-8

To know your purpose in life is one of the most liberating, empowering moments. Seven years after beginning his reign in Judah, David became the king of all of Israel. Even while Saul was king, David was leading them. Now they recognized it. "And David realized that the Lord had made him king over Israel and had made his kingdom great for the sake of his people Israel" (5:12). David was to make much of God and to bless God's people. Nothing else mattered.

David sought the Lord before going into battle and found great success (5:17-25). He did not, however, seek the Lord before moving the Ark to Jerusalem. The idea was noble, but in the excitement, David and his officials forgot to follow the commands of God. They put the Ark on a cart rather than supporting it by poles on the shoulders of men. As a result of their disobedience, Perez lost his life. After some time of contemplation and repentance, David brought the Ark to his city, and he danced with joy. His wife Michal was offended by his display, but David was more concerned with honoring God than with the opinion of his wife (6:21-22).

His desire to honor Yahweh moved David to build a permanent home for him. God told David this would be the task of his son, but He gave David great promises about his family line's endurance (7:1-17). David was overwhelmed by God's grace and mercy (7:18-29).

Ask God to make clear your pathway to glorifying Him.

#### Thursday, April 4, 2019—2 Samuel 1-4

Death has a way of crystallizing our thoughts. There is time to consider

what was. There is opportunity to remember good things.

When David learned of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths, he went into mourning. As a gifted writer of songs, David found comfort and relief as he put thoughts into words, so he composed a song for these two fallen heroes (1:17-27). Some might wonder, "Was Saul a hero? Don't you remember how he treated David?" David knew Saul was the anointed of God, despite his imperfections. Personal instances did not affect how the entire nation should mourn for their king. David was gracious and honored these men.

With Saul's death, David became king. He was the one Samuel had anointed, yet Abner, the commander of Saul's army, did not agree with David's anointing, so he anointed Saul's son as king. As a result, there were years of conflict between Israel (Ish-bosheth's camp) and Judah (David's). (When God's people decide to do things other than God's way, there will always be conflict.) When Abner finally conceded that David was God's anointed, the nation was on the pathway to unity (3:17-19).

Tragically, Joab held a deep grudge against Abner for the murder of Joab's brother (2:23). He murdered Abner, and David grieved (3:31-38). Abner had earlier said bitterness was the only thing gained by the sword (2:26), but Joab had not taken those words to heart.

Ask God to make you gracious in the face of adversity and mistreatment. Pray for words of comfort and truth in times of grief.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019—1 Samuel 29-31

The modern culture of nations and allegiances makes it extremely difficult to understand the political and military environment of 1 Samuel. Israel was new on the scene in Canaan, and they had destroyed or displaced many of the previous peoples and nations who resided there. They were undoubtedly a force with which to be reckoned.

David and his men, however, found shelter under the wings of the primary nemesis, the Philistines. Did the Philistines see them as little threat since they were small in number? Was David troubled by aligning himself with the ones who

sought to destroy his people? Answers are elusive, but for the Philistines, it became clear they could not trust David and his men as they marched against Israel (29:4).

In the larger perspective, God was continually guiding David wherever he went. David's dismissal by the Philistines sent him home in time to address a raid by the hated Amalekites. David's surrender to Yahweh and his gracious spirit moved him to distribute the plunder from their raid to everyone in their army—regardless of whether they had been on the front line or in a support role (30:24). Everyone received more than deserved. He also sent plunder to his people in Judah.

David's dismissal also meant he was not part of the battle that ended Saul's life (31:1-13). He would not have that blemish as part of his legacy when he began leading the nation. God's grace is astounding.

Praise God for His wisdom and grace. Pray to live with such.

Tuesday, April 2, 2019—1 Samuel 25-28

“Now Samuel died . . . “ (25:1). With those simple words, the story of the great unifier of Israel comes to an end. He lived with integrity and died in honor. One of the last important steps he took was to anoint David as the next king. He equipped the next generation to flourish.

As David continued to wait on the Lord to become king, he needed assistance to make good decisions. He sent some men to Nabal to request some provisions. Nabal, whose name means “fool,” scoffed at the idea. His refusal was tantamount to a threat, and David assembled his troops for war. Nabal's wife, Abigail, headed off the threat with an impressive display of hospitality and prevented David from shedding blood unnecessarily. God Himself brought an end to Nabal days later.

David refrained from unnecessary bloodshed when he spared Saul's life again (26:9). As with Nabal, David knew the better course of action was to allow God to bring judgment. David appealed to Saul. If God had stirred Saul, then David asked that his refusal to kill Saul be a peace offering (26:19), but if Saul himself

were the source, he asked Saul to see David's sparing Saul's life as proof the hunt was unnecessary.

Saul soon saw the threat of the Philistines rising, and prayed for direction. God would not answer, so he consulted a medium, something expressly forbidden by God. The spirit of Samuel came to Saul and told him of his impending doom (28:19).

Pray your life is marked by faithfulness, even to the very end.