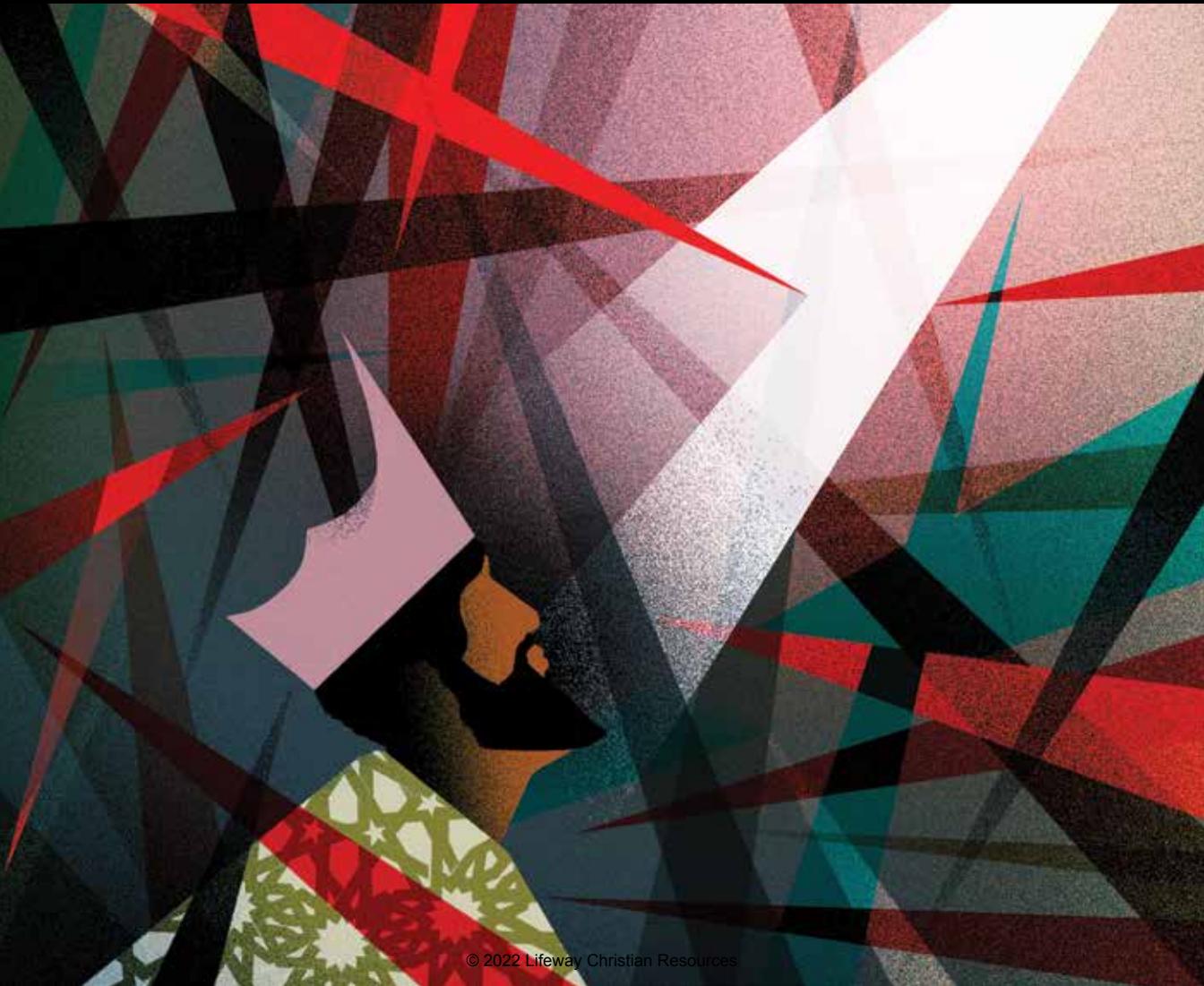




the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

FROM UNITY TO DIVISION

ADULTS / DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE / SUMMER 2022 / VOL. 4



GOD'S WORD TO YOU

WE NEED THE TRUE KING

The last verse in the Book of Judges—a book that chronicles the downward spiral of disobedience of those who were called to be radically different as the people of God—is one of the most depressing verses in the Bible: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him” (Judg. 21:25).

Is this not a fitting definition of sin? In this one verse, we see the prideful root of self-lordship, self-exaltation, and self-determination at the core of all our rebellion. We are, in our own minds, the gods of our own universe. And as such, we have the right to choose whatever is right and wrong for ourselves, and anything that imposes some authority over us other than our own autonomous minds, hearts, and desires is a constraint that must be thrown off.

As sinners, we are like the Israelites of old, convinced of our own truth, our own ideas, and our own wisdom. Our sin has blinded us to what is truly good and right, and it's precisely because of this blindness that we need a true king.

We need a king who tells us the truth, guides us with justice, and leads us in righteousness. And we need a king who can open our eyes to all these things and more. But because we are enslaved by our own desires, the true king we need must not only be our ruler but also our rescuer.

In Jesus, we find this King—the One before whom every knee will bow and whose greatness every tongue will eventually confess.

In Jesus, the true King has come. He is the King of love as well as the King of power.

In Jesus, and in Him alone, will we finally find all our desires for peace, security, and wholeness met.

What is left for us, then, is to acknowledge that every other king we seek to enthrone is only a substitute for Jesus. Far better is for us to trust in Him not only as our rescuer but also as our ruler and to acknowledge that all authority has been given to Him.

CONTENTS

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SUGGESTED FOR
THE WEEK OF

All Ages Study Plan	6
How to Use the Daily Discipleship Guide	8
7 Arrows of Bible Reading	10

UNIT 10: BECAUSE OF YOUR HARDENED HEART

	Introduction	12
June 5	Session 1 Saul, the People's King (1 Samuel 7–10)	16
June 12	Session 2 Saul, the Delivering King (1 Samuel 11)	24
June 19	Session 3 Saul, the Failed King (1 Samuel 13–15)	32
June 26	Session 4 God, the Just King (Doctrine: God Is Just)	40

UNIT 11: CREATE A CLEAN HEART FOR ME

	Introduction	48
July 3	Session 1 David, the Chosen King (1 Samuel 16)	52
July 10	Session 2 David, the Victorious King (1 Samuel 17)	60
July 17	Session 3 David, the Faithful King (2 Samuel 5–7)	68
July 24	Session 4 David, the Failed King (2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 51)	76
July 31	Session 5 God, the Gracious King (Doctrine: God Is Gracious)	84

UNIT 12: IF YOU WALK BEFORE ME WITH A HEART OF INTEGRITY

	Introduction	92
Aug. 7	Session 1 Solomon, the Wise King (1 Kings 1–3)	96
Aug. 14	Session 2 Solomon, the Worshiping King (1 Kings 6–9)	104
Aug. 21	Session 3 Solomon, the Failed King (1 Kings 10–12)	112
Aug. 28	Session 4 God, the Merciful King (Doctrine: God Is Merciful)	120

God Is in the Details	128
References	130

THE EDITOR

“We three kings . . .” In a Summer volume, it seems silly to start this letter from the editor with a reference to a Christmas song, but it fits. In this leg of our journey through the storyline of the Bible, we leave the period of the judges and enter into the period of the kings, namely, Saul, David, and Solomon.

These three kings (you see?) were unique in their service to Israel from all the kings after them because these alone ruled over a united kingdom. The Lord brought His people together, twelve tribes under one banner, to be a light to the world of what it means to have the one true God as your sovereign Lord. But sin holds powerful sway over sinners, whether they be citizens or rulers, and this always results in devastation, destruction, division, and death.

As you study the rise and fall of these three kings, expect to see yourself in them. They made wise, God-honoring choices at times, but they also made foolish, sinful choices that tarnished their reputations and marred their ability to lead. As each one fails in his responsibility, we see afresh our own shortcomings and recognize that we can't live up to God's calling. We can't be the kings and queens this world needs. No, we need a King who obeys God's Word without fault, a King whose heart follows after God without sin, and a King who embodies wisdom without foolishness. This King we need—Jesus Christ—would arise from the line of David and Solomon in a fractured, divided world, but He came from His Father to bring forgiveness, salvation, peace, and unity for all those who believe.

Daniel Davis

Content Editor

The Gospel Project for Adults

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Ed Stetzer and Trevin Wax
Founding Editors

Daniel Davis
Content Editor

Y Bonesteel
Content and Production Editor

Ken Braddy
Director of Sunday School

Brian Daniel
Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments to:

Content Editor by email to daniel.davis@lifeway.com or mail to Content Editor, The Gospel Project: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide, One Lifeway Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments on the web at lifeway.com.

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THE WRITERS

Y Bonesteale (Unit 11 Introduction) is the content and production editor for The Gospel Project for Adults curriculum. She has an MDiv from Talbot School of Theology at Biola University and enjoys tasting foods from around the world with her husband and four children.

Darryl Dash (Unit 10 Introduction) is a husband, father, pastor, and author of *8 Habits for Growth: A Simple Guide to Becoming More Like Christ*. Find out more about Darryl at DashHouse.com and on Twitter @DashHouse.

Josh Hayes (Unit 12 Introduction) is an editor of Bibles and Reference Books for Lifeway Christian Resources. He earned a PhD in Systematic Theology from Westminster Theological Seminary. Josh is an online instructor at Westminster as well as at Union University. He and his wife, Sara, live in Hendersonville, Tennessee, with their two children, Josiah and Cora.

Leslie Hudson (Unit 11, Sessions 1-5) loves her mornings of silence, coffee, and Jesus; not in that order. She lives with her husband and kids in White Bluff, Tennessee, where they raise blueberries, figs, and bees. She loves to spend her free time reading, writing, journaling, and helping others know and follow Jesus.

Matt Stewart (Unit 10, Sessions 1-4) is the pastor of teaching and care at Christ Community Church in Huntersville, North Carolina, and a ThM candidate at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where he also earned an MDiv. Matthew and his wife, Courtney, have six children.

Jeremy Writebol (Unit 12, Sessions 1-4) is the Lead Campus Pastor at Woodside Bible Church in Plymouth, Michigan. He is also the Executive Director of Gospel-Centered Discipleship (GCD). He has served in pastoral ministry full-time for over twenty years and is the author of several books. He is married to Stephanie and is the father of Allison and Ethan.



ALL AGES STUDY PLAN

VOL 1: From Creation to Chaos

(Genesis) Fall 2021

Unit 1: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God (Gen. 1–2; Pss. 8; 96)

Unit 2: Let Us Make a Name for Ourselves (Gen. 3–11)

Unit 3: I Will Make Your Name Great (Gen. 11–50)

VOL 2: From Captivity to the Wilderness

(Exodus–Deuteronomy) Winter 2021–22

Unit 4: Out of Egypt I Called My Son (Ex. 1–15)

Unit 5: To Dwell in the House of the Lord (Ex. 16–40; Lev.)

Unit 6: Be Holy, Because I Am Holy (Num. 13–14; 20–21)

VOL 3: From Conquest to a Kingdom

(Joshua–1 Samuel) Spring 2022

Unit 7: Lord, Teach Me Your Statutes (Josh. 1; 3–4)

Unit 8: Fear the Lord and Worship Him (Josh. 2; 6–11; 23–24)

Unit 9: There Is No Fear of God Before Their Eyes (Judg.; Ruth; 1 Sam. 1–6)

VOL 4: From Unity to Division

(1 Samuel–1 Kings) Summer 2022

Unit 10: Because of Your Hardened Heart (1 Sam. 8–15)

Unit 11: Create a Clean Heart for Me (1 Sam. 16–17; 2 Sam. 6–7; 11–12)

Unit 12: If You Walk Before Me with a Heart of Integrity (1 Kings 1–12)

VOL 5: From Exile to Rebellion

(1 Kings–The Prophets) Fall 2022

Unit 13: What Comes Out of the Mouth Comes from the Heart (1 Kings 12–18; 2 Kings 1–5; Isa. 44)

Unit 14: Seek the Lord, All You Humble of the Earth (2 Chron. 24; Isa. 22; 25; 30; Zeph.)

Unit 15: He Has Made Every Nationality (Jonah; Nah.; 2 Chron. 36)

VOL 6: From Captivity to Restoration

(The Prophets, Ezra, Nehemiah) Winter 2022–23

Unit 16: The Lord Keeps His Eye on Those Who Fear Him (Jer. 29–30; Dan.)

Unit 17: Take Refuge in the Lord (Ezra 1–6; Zech. 13–14)

Unit 18: For Look, the Day Is Coming (Esth.; Neh.; Mal.)

VOL 7: From Heaven to Earth

(The Gospels) Spring 2023

Unit 19: Here Is the Lamb of God
(John 1–2; Luke 2; Mark 1; Matt. 4)

Unit 20: God’s Love Was Revealed
Among Us in This Way (John 3–4)

Unit 21: Without Faith It Is Impossible
to Please God (Luke 4–5)

**VOL 8: From Wonder
to Rejection**

(The Gospels) Summer 2023

Unit 22: The Works That I Do in My
Father’s Name Testify About Me
(Mark 4; 8; Luke 5; Matt. 9; John 10)

Unit 23: The Kingdom of God Is in Your
Midst (Matt. 5–7; 13; 24; Luke 15; 17)

Unit 24: God’s Glory in the Face of Jesus
Christ (Luke 13; John 11)

**VOL 9: From Death
to Resurrection**

(The Gospels) Fall 2023

Unit 25: Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
Who Kills the Prophets
(Matt. 21–25; Mark 1; John 6; 14)

Unit 26: The Hour Has Come
(John 12; Matt. 26)

Unit 27: The King of the Jews
(Luke 22–23; Matt. 27–28)

**VOL 10: From Many People
to One People**

(The Gospels, Acts) Winter 2023-24

Unit 28: I Am with You Always
(Luke 24; John 20–21; Matt. 28)

Unit 29: You Will Be My Witnesses
(Acts 1–2)

Unit 30: Every Day the Lord Added to
Their Number (Acts 2–5)

**VOL 11: From One Nation
to All Nations**

(Acts and Epistles) Spring 2024

Unit 31: Every Knee Will Bow
(Acts 5–8; Phil. 2)

Unit 32: The Power and the Wisdom
of God (Acts 9–12; 1 Cor. 1; 12)

Unit 33: A Prisoner of Christ Jesus
(Acts 9; 13–14; Philem.)

**VOL 12: From This World
to the World to Come**

(Acts, Epistles, Revelation) Summer 2024

Unit 34: Ambassadors for Christ
(Acts 15–19; 2 Cor. 5; Eph. 4)

Unit 35: That I May Gain Christ
(Acts 20–28; Phil. 3)

Unit 36: A New Heaven and a New Earth
(Rev. 4–5; 19–22)

HOW TO USE THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Central to your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults is the Daily Discipleship Guide. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:

BEGIN WITH PERSONAL TIME IN THE WORD

We recommend beginning your week with the daily devotions. These devotions lay a foundation for what will be explored and discussed in your group time as you build healthy rhythms of personal discipleship.



DAY 1

READ:
1 Kings 6:1-8:13

FOCAL PASSAGE:
1 Kings 8:10-15

NOTES

They were stopped in their tracks. Wanting to continue their service and work of worship, they were completely hindered from doing anything more. The priests had taken the ark of the covenant and set it in the holy of holies. As they moved back through the holy place to the outer courts, the dark cloud heavy with the glory of God descended and filled every space in the temple facility. All they could do was stand and be amazed at the presence of God. God was with them!

We might be jealous to have this experience in our own lives. We want to see God's presence in visible form and be so overcome with awe that we can't do anything more. How real and meaningful and good would it be if God showed up with us like He did with them? Then we'd have a real worship experience.

Could it be that we are missing the bigger picture if we feel this kind of jealousy? What is to stop us today from giving praise and honor and glory to God because He actually is with us, even though we cannot visibly see Him? While we may long for and desire the visible, tangible, physical expressions of God's presence, we cannot ignore the greater reality of His infinite presence with His people now!

The good news is that we aren't required, nor is it necessary, to travel to Jerusalem to offer praise and glory to God. We don't have to look for a dark cloud and approach the Lord with fear and trembling. God is with us! Because of Christ's ascension to the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit, God is with us in every place at all times. We can stop in our tracks right now and praise and worship God because He is with us!

What are some ways you can worship and praise God wherever you are?

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"The foundation of worship in the heart, therefore, is not emotional ('I feel full of worship' or 'The atmosphere is so worshipful'). Actually, it is theological. Worship is not something we 'work up,' it is something that 'comes down' to us, from the character of God."
-Sinclair Ferguson

105

STUDY THE BIBLE WITH YOUR BIBLE

Reading and studying the Bible is absolutely life-changing, and we believe the best way to study the Bible is to use the Bible you own. Whether you read from the CSB, ESV, NIV, KJV, or many other translations, the Daily Discipleship Guide helps you engage with the session not only with our book but your Book.



GET BACK TO BASICS

As you read and study, we recommend using the tool found in your Daily Discipleship Guide called the “7 Arrows of Bible Reading.” The 7 Arrows guide both novice and experienced students of the Word through the basic mechanics of Bible study by asking a few key questions of any passage (see pages 10-11 for more information).

7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING

by Matt Rogers

There is often a vast disconnect between the awareness of the need for disciple-making and practical tools that actually aid in this work. Three factors are essential: Scripture, relationships, and time. Discipleship happens when the life-changing truth of Scripture is infused into genuine relationships over an extended period of time.

Our desire was to create a simple, reproducible strategy that would facilitate this process. This led us to develop a simple strategy for small clusters (2-3 people) to meet together regularly and talk about the Scriptures and apply them to their lives.

The seven arrows of Bible reading were an attempt at developing a tool for proper hermeneutics to power these relationships. We did not want our people to simply talk about the Bible. We wanted them to understand the Bible and know how to apply it to their lives. Each cluster would read a predetermined passage of Scripture and discuss it using these seven arrows.



10

DISCUSS AND APPLY IN COMMUNITY

Each session concludes with a two-page discussion guide. This guide includes the key points of the session along with interactive questions and activities designed to address the needs of a variety of learning styles. Mark up the discussion guide, make notes, fill in the blanks, do the activities, write out questions and thoughts—make it yours!



7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING

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What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?

ARROW 1: The goal was for the clusters to start by summarizing the main point of the passage as succinctly as possible, ideally in one sentence.

ARROW 2: Next, the clusters sought to discern authorial intent for the passage by asking what it meant to its original audience. Since a text of Scripture can never mean what it never meant, it is necessary to begin by discerning what the text meant. Often this may require the clusters to consult other study tools or cross-reference other biblical texts to arrive at the meaning of the text.

ARROW 3: Thirdly, we asked what the text tells us about the nature and character of God and specifically His work through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

ARROW 4: Fourthly, the text was analyzed to see what it tells us about humanity. Bryan Chappell refers to this as the “fallen condition focus” of the text. What does the text reveal about sin and humankind’s need for the gospel?

ARROW 5: Then we moved the clusters to application. Since we had rooted the clusters in the meaning of the text, they were now positioned to rightly apply it’s meaning to their lives.

ARROW 6: From there we wanted our clusters to apply the Scripture to their relationships with others. Ideally, they would discuss how the text shaped both how they related to other believers and how they lived on mission in the world.

ARROW 7: Finally, the clusters rooted their prayers in the Scriptures. Hopefully, the previous six arrows kindled the flames of passionate prayer in the lives of the clusters—both for their own sanctification and for their mission to the lost.

With this model, we touched on three important areas for discipleship:

Scripture—Disciple-making was rooted in a rightful understanding of Scripture and not in simply doing life together, unpacking another sermon, or dependance on classroom instruction.

Simplicity—Disciple-making was simple enough for everyone to get involved. All believers could take these principles, a Bible, and a relationship with a young Christian and get to work.

Stickiness—Disciple-making through understanding and applying Scripture was etched in the minds of our young church. They could use these same arrows not only to guide their cluster discussions but also their personal Bible study, small group leadership, and comprehension of sermons.

These arrows have proven to be a unique tool in our disciple-making toolbox that the Lord is using to call and build faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus.

Matt Rogers is the teaching pastor at The Church at Cherrydale in Greenville, South Carolina. His church developed the Seven Arrows tool to help people read and understand Scripture within their small groups. The concept has gone on to form the basis of a 52-week devotional for teens from Lifeway Students, the Seven Arrows Bible from B&H, and is now featured in The Gospel Project for Adults and Students.

UNIT 10

+

BECAUSE

OF YOUR

HARDENED

HEART

“The Lord Has Rejected You as King”

by Darryl Dash

We had a new leader. I sat in the conference center as he outlined his vision. I marveled at his skill as I listened to him talk. He used humor, well-crafted phrases, and passion as he described how he would lead the organization. When he finished, everyone jumped to their feet, clapping.

A few years later, he was gone—his vision in ruins, his legacy in doubt.

I love good leaders. I’ve seen the difference that a good leader can make to a church, school, business, or family. I devour leadership books, and I’m always looking for ways to become a more effective leader myself.

At the same time, I’ve seen a pattern repeated too many times: early promise is followed by struggles, and sometimes by failure. It seems that we sometimes get the leaders we want, but the leaders we want end up letting us down.

It’s a pattern that has been repeated at least since the days of King Saul.

THE RISE OF A GREAT LEADER

If People’s Choice awards existed in ancient Israel, Saul would have won.

Of course, the people should have known better. Samuel had warned Israel against choosing a king (1 Sam. 8:10-18). Samuel knew that the people were looking to a human leader for what only God could provide. He also knew that leader would let them down. But the warning went unheeded, and they got the leader they wanted.

Initially, Saul was amazing. First Samuel 9:2 describes him as impressive and taller than anyone else. It seems Saul had charisma, which would reveal itself later; and when you find a charismatic, good-looking leader, it’s easy to buy in.

Besides that, things at first went well for Saul, for a while. He projected humility (9:21). The Holy Spirit filled him and he prophesied (10:10). It looked like he had God’s seal of approval. Almost everyone got excited about his new rule (10:24),

*We tend to focus on what a leader does,
yet what a leader believes and how a leader lives
matter far more than we think.*

with only a few wicked holdouts (10:27). He also got a quick win under his belt (11:1-11), displayed grace to his opponents (11:12-13), and even led the people to worship God (11:14-15).

After years of struggling, Israel had finally found their leader.

THE DOWNFALL

But, no leader is perfect. We tend to excuse the failures of leaders at first, as long as they continue to inspire confidence and deliver results.

The problem comes when a leader's faults overwhelm everything else. No matter how gifted or popular a leader may appear, his or her character will begin to show.

In Saul's case, he revealed a major character defect. Under pressure, Saul took matters into his own hands, rather than following Samuel's instructions (13:1-14). Samuel, the man who anointed him, confronted him. Saul had squandered his leadership.

Sadly, Saul set a pattern for future kings. Many of them ended up revealing major

character issues, leading Israel into greater disobedience. I see echoes of Saul's leadership style in the stories of great leaders who end up squandering their potential because of narcissism, unchecked pride, or other sins.

"No man had a greater opportunity than Saul," observed Henrietta Mears, "and no man ever was a greater failure."¹

LOOKING FOR A GOOD LEADER

We should never be surprised when leaders fail. Samuel's warning still stands today: Don't look to leaders for what only God can give. Every human will disappoint. Even the best leader will let us down.

It's easy to become cynical about leaders, but that's wrong too. We need good leaders. Scripture, for instance, talks about the need for leaders within the church, but the emphasis is on finding leaders with godly character (Titus 1:5-16). We tend to focus on what a leader does, yet what a leader believes and how a leader lives matter far more than we think (1 Tim. 4:16).

So find good leaders. Choose character over charisma. Pray for them. Encourage them. But don't look to them for the security only God can provide.

We're always tempted to look for security in things that will disappoint. Leaders, jobs, relationships, and money are all fine, but none of them provide the security we need. Security can only be found in God. The story of Saul reminds us that we can often get what we want in life, only to be disappointed that it doesn't deliver what we want.

Every other leader
will fail. Only Jesus
obeys God perfectly.
Only Jesus is worthy
of our worship. Only
Jesus will never
let us down.

It turns out that we see a few of our own problems in Saul's story. Like the people of Israel, we look elsewhere for what only God can provide. Like Saul, we're quick to choose our own path under pressure. Unlike Saul, God is a just King, and He would be right to judge us for our sinful conduct and our twisted hearts. We deserve God's justice just as much as Saul and the people of Israel. We're all without excuse.

But Saul's story provides us with a couple of signs of hope.

First, it reminds us that God is gracious. Despite early signs of trouble in Saul, God still showed grace to Saul, filling him with His Spirit and granting him victory. Despite wanting a king against Samuel's advice, God showed grace to Israel by not writing them off and by promising to provide a better king. Praise God that He extends grace to us when we don't deserve it! Other than Jesus, we don't find any perfect people in Scripture, but we find plenty of God's grace to those who need it.

Second, that promised better king gives us great hope (1 Sam. 13:13-14). Immediately, we see that king was David. But in the long run, the better King is Jesus, who died for our sins, triumphed over death, and now reigns forever at God the Father's right hand.

Every other leader will fail. Only Jesus obeys God perfectly. Only Jesus is worthy of our worship. Only Jesus will never let us down.



SAUL, THE PEOPLE'S KING

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

God is the one true King, and He alone is able to lead His people as they need.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

1 Samuel 7–10

+ **SETTING:**

God raised up Samuel to judge His people and to call them to repentance. Under Samuel's leadership, Israel experienced freedom from the surrounding nations, restoration of land, and revival in worship. During his lifetime, Samuel traveled throughout the nation to ensure the people were faithful to the covenant the Lord had made with them. But when Samuel was old, his sons, whom he had appointed as judges, proved to be wicked leaders who took advantage of the people (1 Sam. 8:3). So the Israelites, in their discontentment, demanded to have a king like the nations around them.

DAY 1

READ:

1 Samuel 7–8

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Samuel 8:4-5

NOTES

Discontentment is the enemy of joy. Of course, none of us sets out to be unhappy with our circumstances, but our hearts have the tendency to drift toward ungratefulness when we fail to guard them from the influence of idols. This truth is evident in the history of Israel. Rather than turning to Yahweh and asking for His help when Samuel's sons failed to judge faithfully, they demanded a king like all the other nations had.

Their request didn't arise suddenly in their hearts. Rather, both the demand itself and the elders' tone suggest a desire that had been brewing for some time. Instead of confessing their sinful desires and walking in repentance, however, the people commanded Samuel to gratify their lusts. But as Israel's story reveals, no person, place, or possession will ever satisfy the longing of the human heart. As the Church Father Augustine prayed, "The thought of you [God] stirs him [man] so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you."¹

Perhaps this is part of why the apostle John ended his first epistle with the exhortation that his readers should guard themselves from idols (1 John 5:21). Likewise, wise Solomon advised his sons to guard their hearts with special and deliberate care because the heart, both physical and metaphorical, is the wellspring of life in us (Prov. 4:23). Knowing our hearts are prone to wander, we must be ever vigilant to protect them from the constant bombardments of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Otherwise, we will slowly grow more and more discontent, even abandoning God Himself, just as Israel did.

What lusts (desires) most frequently cry out for satisfaction in your life? What practical steps will you take to guard your heart against these desires?

DAY 2

READ:

1 Samuel 9:1-2

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Samuel 9:2

NOTES

When I was in junior high, a new kid to the school joined the football team. He was tall, fast, and he boasted of having excellent receiver's hands. No one on our team looked as much like a real athlete as this kid. But then came the first day of training camp. No doubt, the kid looked the part, but the first time the football was thrown his way, it was evident he could not play the part—he simply could not catch the ball. All our hopes and dreams of having a star wide receiver came crashing down that day.

We find a similar predicament when the author of 1 Samuel introduces Saul, the son of Kish. This impressive young man was tall, a head taller than anyone else. Saul looked like a king for sure, but could he lead like a king? It should catch our attention that the author emphasized Saul's outward appearance rather than his inward character. While we do not want to spoil the rest of the story, the author seemed to paint a quick picture of a man who looked kingly but would not act so.

As we will come to see and be reminded of, human beings look at a person's outward appearance, but the Lord always sees and judges the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). Therefore, we ought to care about our personal holiness, both inside and out.

Speaking at the ordination of one Dan Edwards, Robert Murray McCheyne stated, "Mr. Edwards, do not forget the inner man, the heart. The cavalry officer knows that his life depends upon his saber, so he keeps it clean. Every stain he wipes off with the greatest care. Mr. Edwards, you are God's chosen instrument. According to your purity, so shall be your success. It is not great talent; it is not great ideas that God uses; it is great likeness to Jesus Christ. Mr. Edwards, a holy man is an awesome weapon in the hand of God."²

Are there areas in your life where you have settled for outward appearances rather than pressing on in conformity to Christ? If so, what will you do about this contradiction?

DAY 3

READ:

1 Samuel 9:3–10:16

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Samuel 10:9-10

NOTES

Having the right equipment is vital for getting the job done right. Whether you are framing a house, replacing a flat tire, or painting a landscape, failure to acquire the appropriate tools can leave you wet, stranded, or staring indefinitely at a blank canvas.

Such was the potential case for Israel's newly anointed king, Saul. Though Saul looked like a king, he simply did not have the necessary qualities to serve as the prince of Yahweh's people. But that is precisely what God specializes in—taking unqualified sinners and using them for His glory. In Saul's case, God changed his heart so that he would have what was necessary to serve as the monarch of Israel. As history reveals, Saul was far from being a godly king. Nevertheless, God used him to deliver His people from their enemies, something that would not have taken place had God not equipped him for service.

Thankfully, we have something Saul never had—the new covenant blessing of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives inside each believer. As a result, we have what is needed to grow in faithfulness to Christ our King. As God is working in us, we can work out our salvation to accomplish God's will for us (Phil. 2:12-13). In and of ourselves, we do not have the equipment needed to obey or serve the Lord. Yet God graciously gives His Spirit to all who call on Christ in faith so that we might live the rest of our lives by His grace and for His glory.

Have you turned from your sins and trusted in Christ as Lord? If not, will you today? If you have, how are you taking advantage of the "equipment" given to you in the Holy Spirit?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"For you will certainly carry out God's purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you whether you serve like Judas or John."³

—C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

DAY 4

READ:

1 Samuel 10:17-19

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Samuel 10:18-19

NOTES

When I was growing up, one of the unspoken rites of passage in my family was when Dad let you sit by yourself in the tree-stand while hunting. I remember being super excited the first time he left me alone in the woods (I was a mighty hunter after all . . .). But as the light began to fade and the chill of night came on, I did not feel so mighty anymore. In fact, the more time passed, the less I cared about seeing “the big one.” I just wanted to be safe and warm. There were moments when I was tempted to panic, but knowing Dad to be a man of his word, I was confident he would come back for me. And sure enough, just as the last sliver of light faded, I heard Dad whistle to let me know he was in the area. And as soon as I heard Dad call, I suddenly felt like a mighty hunter once again!

Knowing Dad to be a man of his word, I endured the isolation and cold until he returned. Israel, on the other hand, failed to remember God’s past faithfulness, and so, they demanded a king to lead them. As Samuel reminded them, Yahweh had delivered them every step of their journey out of Egypt and into the promised land. In other words, they had zero reason to doubt God’s goodness or faithfulness in their present situation. But their failure to recall His reliability led them to make irrational decisions that would have monumental consequences.

As John Piper notes, “Confidence in someone’s future reliability is grounded in a history of past faithfulness. This is also the way it is with God.” Thus, Israel “forsook their faith in God’s future grace because they stopped remembering his past grace.”⁴ In short, if you are going to continue following Jesus, you must look back to remember God’s past faithfulness. His grace has been, is, and always will be sufficient.

What are some ways God has shown Himself faithful in your own past? How will God’s past graces in your life encourage you in the face of present challenges and an unknown future?

DAY 5

READ:

1 Samuel 10:20-27

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Samuel 10:20-24

NOTES



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #54: CHRIST AS KING

God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

We saw throughout the book of Judges how the Lord raised up judges to liberate and defend His people. As the downward cycle of sin progressed among the Israelites, so too did a downward cycle of virtue progress through the judges. In essence, it would seem the Lord raised up the judges the people deserved—people who were equally as flawed as they were.

If this was true, then the ministry of Samuel was a gracious reprieve as he faithfully judged Israel all of his life (7:15-17). But his preserving influence would not last, as he too would die. Rightly fearing the wreck that would come from Samuel's wicked sons being left in charge over Israel (recalling the fallout of Eli's wicked sons; see 1 Sam. 2-4), the Israelites made a wrong turn, setting their hopes on a human king instead of their divine Deliverer. And here we return to the pattern of the people getting the deliverer they deserved.

When the people requested a king, Samuel considered it an offense—and it was. But the Lord clarified that it was an offense against Him first and foremost—a rejection (8:6-8)! And when Samuel repeated this accusation just prior to the selection process of their new king (10:18-19), the Israelites did not respond with fear, trepidation, and remorse. In fact, they didn't seem to have any emotions at all except for eager anticipation of getting what they wanted—a king like those of the pagan nations surrounding them. And what they got was an impressive young man by stature but who was initially marked by fear (recall Gideon; see Judg. 6). And later, Saul would prove himself a maker of rash decisions and one who lacked remorse for his own disobedience.

As sinful human beings, we often live under the rule of our own deserved “deliverers,” but in Jesus Christ, like Samuel, we have a gracious reprieve, receiving the Judge and Savior we don't deserve and whose loving rule lasts for eternity because He died and rose again.

What actions will you take to honor King Jesus, who died and rose again for your salvation and eternal life?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Two cities, then, have been created by two loves: that is, the earthly by love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the heavenly by love of God extending to contempt of self. The one, therefore, glories in itself, the other in the Lord; the one seeks glory from men, the other finds its highest glory in God, the Witness of our conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, 'Thou are my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.'"⁵

-Augustine (354-430)

POINT 1: An earthly king is demanded by the people (1 Sam. 8:4-9).

The people's demand for a king was _____ by the Lord, but it also revealed the concern of their hearts—they wanted to be like the _____ .

? **What are some of the lures of the world that attract and tempt God's people?**

In desiring to be like the nations, the people of Israel once again rejected God's _____ and, more importantly, God Himself as their rightful _____ .

? **Why should we view all sin as an implicit rejection of God as our rightful King?**

POINT 2: An impressive king is anointed for the people (1 Sam. 9:1-2; 10:1-10).

Saul was a physically impressive man, but his qualifying credentials came from the Lord, who _____ Saul and changed his _____ .

? **How does Saul's anointing as king compare to a believer's qualification for service?**

POINT 3: A reluctant king is presented to the people (1 Sam. 10:17-24).

Israel _____ and rebelled against God by demanding a king, and God's _____ here was to give them exactly what they wanted—an impressive, earthly king. But they also got a king who was fearful and who eventually would rebel against the Lord.



What are some ways you have experienced God's discipline?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #54: CHRIST AS KING

NOTES

God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would _____ His people and _____ all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the _____ .

MY RESPONSE

Because we have trusted in Christ, the King of kings, for our salvation, we seek to put away all disobedience and submit to Him so that the world too might experience redemption through Him and enter into God's kingdom.

- **HEAD:** When you think about God, do you imagine an angry tyrant or a loving father? Why? How does your perspective need to change?
- **HEART:** What steps will you take to foster a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus, your Savior and King?
- **HANDS:** Where have you been reluctant to obey the Lord, and how will you obey now in honor of King Jesus?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"There were thus two things which the Savior did for us by becoming Man. He banished death from us and made us anew; and, invisible and imperceptible as in Himself He is, He became visible through His works and revealed Himself as the Word of the Father, the Ruler and King of the whole creation."⁶

-Athanasius (c. 293-373)