

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY ONE

God's Heart, God's Man, God's Ways

Selected Scriptures

Isn't it beautiful how God chooses nobodies to turn into somebody? That's the story of the life of David.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EVERYONE needs a role model—someone whose life lays out a road map to follow. A good role model warns of pitfalls and, more importantly, guides others toward a life completely devoted to God. David was such a model.

In his book, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll describes this remarkable man.

Poet, musician, courageous warrior, and national statesman, David distinguished himself as one of God's greatest men. In battle, he modeled invincible confidence. In decisions, he judged with wisdom and equity. In loneliness, he wrote with transparent vulnerability and quiet trust. In friendship, he was loyal to the end. Whether a humble shepherd boy or an obscure musician before the King Saul, he remained faithful and trustworthy. . . . What a man of God!

Yet David was human to the core—mighty in battle but weak at home, unbeatable when fighting his mightiest foes but defenseless against his own anger and lust.

The triumphs that marked David's youth gradually faded in the distance as he found himself lost deep in the forest of his own sin. In his moments of brokenness, however, David showed what one can do after drifting astray. Tears of deep grief and humble confession drip from the pages of his penitent psalms, revealing a true role model's heart of devotion in the darkest times.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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The example of David's life acts as a spiritual compass that points to God—both in moments of great faith and in seasons of even greater failure. David showed how anyone—imperfections and all—can be a person after God's own heart.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

In his psalms, David poured out his heart to God—all his fears, joys, victories, and losses. Thankfully, God preserved these psalms as a guide for His people's prayers. Offer *Psalm 139:1, 5–6* as your prayer before you search the Scriptures today:

*O LORD, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me. . . .
You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too great for me to understand!*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel share how Israel graduated from an insignificant family of nomads to a firmly established kingdom. The narrative begins by focusing on Israel's first king, Saul. While Saul's great physical stature made him equal to the kings of other nations, God's people needed a king of great *spiritual* stature who loved and served God.

Because Saul did not fear or obey God, God removed Saul from the throne. The narrative reaches a climax in 1 Samuel 16 when the modest shepherd David was anointed king. The rest of 1 and 2 Samuel tells of the mountains and valleys of David's life. Take some time to review Pastor Chuck's charts below to see the big picture of this biblical account.



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FIRST SAMUEL

BEGINNING	Samuel The Last Judge				Saul The First King		ENDING
	BIRTH	GROWTH AND CALL	MINISTRY	CHANGE	REJECTION BY GOD	REBELLION AGAINST GOD	
Samuel’s godliness					Impatient		
National hope					Rash		
Motivation					Disobedient		
Purity					“Insane”		
					Jealous		
					Murderous		
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTERS 2–3	CHAPTERS 4–7	CHAPTERS 8–12	CHAPTERS 13–16	DAVID chosen, trained, tested, protected . . .	Saul’s apostasy
						CHAPTERS 17–31	Depression
							Personal despair
							Suicide
Attitude of the People	Public trust				Public disillusionment		
Theme	Though leaders and nations change, God’s purposes always move forward.						
Key Verses	8:6–9; 13:14						
Christ in 1 Samuel	Typified in Samuel, who was a prophet, priest, and judge; also portrayed in the life of David . . . shepherd, king, and born in Bethlehem						

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SECOND SAMUEL

	David's Triumphs		David's Troubles			Appendix
	Reigning in Hebron over Judea	Reigning in Jerusalem over all Israel	With himself	With his family	With his nation	Miscellaneous narratives
	David's lament (1) David's crowning (2) David's increase (3-4)	A new capital (5) A new worship center (6) A new dynasty (7) A new boundary (8) A new son (9) Another new boundary (10)	David's sin (11) Nathan's denunciation (12)	Amnon's immorality (13) Absalom's crime and flight (14) Absalom's revolt (15) Absalom's counselors (16-17) Absalom's death (18)	David's return (19) Sheba's revolt (20)	A famine (21) A song (22) A prophecy (23) A failure (24)
	CHAPTERS 1-4	CHAPTERS 5-10	CHAPTERS 11-12	CHAPTERS 13-18	CHAPTERS 19-20	CHAPTERS 21-24
Theme	Blessings or consequences follow every action.					
Key Verses	7:12-13					
Christ in 2 Samuel	Foreshadowed in David's reign, which, though imperfect, is characterized by justice, wisdom, and integrity; the Messiah, the Son of David, is promised as an offspring of the Davidic line and One who will sit upon David's throne forever.					

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Now, turn to 1 Samuel to look more closely at some key events leading up to David's rise from obscurity.



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Observation: Israel's Kings

Any time Pastor Chuck studies Scripture, he follows the same four steps: observation, interpretation, correlation, and application.² In the observation phase, he asks, “What does this passage say?” Only after he’s thoroughly observed the text does he consider what the passage means.

Israel Demands a Human King—1 Samuel 8:1–22

Before the establishment of the kingdom, the prophet Samuel stood as the figurehead over Israel. Yet [1 Samuel 8:1–3](#) reveals that Samuel’s life was reaching its end, and his sons were wicked men. Consequently, what request did the elders of Israel make of Samuel in [8:5](#)?

According to God’s words in [8:7](#), what did this request reveal about the Israelites?

According to [8:19–20](#), what was the real reason the Israelites made their request of Samuel?



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Replacing a King with a Shepherd—1 Samuel 13:1–14; 16:1–13

Because Israel wanted to be like their neighboring nations, God gave them a king who would satisfy their shallow desires. When Samuel first presented King Saul to the people, the passage notes that he stood “head and shoulders above anyone else.” Overjoyed at this image of their mighty hero, the people shouted, “Long live the king!” (1 Samuel 10:23–24).

Throughout his reign, however, the sheen on Saul's heroic image tarnished. What accusation did Samuel make against Saul in 13:13?

According to Samuel's words in 13:14, what characteristic did Saul lack that the new king would possess?

According to 16:7, why did God ultimately choose David over Saul?



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King Saul was no role model. He lacked certain key qualities that God desired in the leader of His chosen people. And He recognized these very traits in young David.



Interpretation: Qualities of a Heart Like God's

When Pastor Chuck interprets a passage, he asks, "What does this passage *mean*?" Careful students of Scripture always trace the steps of their interpretations back to observations from the text and then formulate theological principles.

A theological principle is a universal truth—either about God, God's plan, humanity, or creation—that is valuable for all people at all times. Theological principles state what God wants people to *know* and *believe* which, in turn, leads them to pure worship, right thinking, and upright living.



***Searching the Scriptures* Study Tool: Free Online Bible Study Resources**

When studying Scripture, you occasionally will encounter an element of a passage that feels too distant, too complex, or too confusing to understand based on your observations alone. In these instances, Pastor Chuck recommends turning to resources written by Bible scholars. Consult these free online resources as you interpret the events of David's life: [Constable's Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org, [Holman Bible Dictionary](http://studylight.org) at studylight.org, [Bible maps](http://insight.org) at insight.org.

God doesn't look for perfection in potential leaders. Instead, according to the first part of [2 Chronicles 16:9](#), what quality does God seek? Based on what you discover, write a principle that reflects the meaning of this verse.

God is looking for men and women whose hearts are completely His, who grieve over wrong and long for their lives to count for Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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What else did God find in David, according to *Psalm 78:70–72* and *89:19–20*? What principle can you draw from David's example as a "servant" and a "common" person?

The first quality is sensitivity to God, "My heart is completely Yours." The second is humility, "God, I want to serve You and others." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How do the portraits of Saul and David in the account of 1 Samuel differ? How does their character differ? How does their rise to the throne differ? What timeless truths can followers of Jesus today learn from this contrast?

God found in David what Saul lacked: spirituality, humility, and integrity . . . qualities anyone can cultivate!

God's choice of a person is contrary to human reason. You're no different, in essence, than David. There was nothing about David on the surface that impressed God and caused God to say, "Wow! That is My man!" But David had character. And that's what God saw.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: Boasting in Christ

In the correlation phase of Bible study, Pastor Chuck turns to other portions of Scripture to shed more light on the theological truths developed through interpretation.

Read *1 Corinthians 1:26–31*. According to *1:26–28* how does God view what the world prizes most: power, wealth, and worldly wisdom?

According to *1:29–30*, how should God's perspective on these matters affect those who believe in Jesus?

In your own words, summarize the profound statement in *1:31*. How does this theological truth help provide a fuller perspective on the story of Saul and David from 1 Samuel?



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The shepherd David stood small in the shadow of King Saul's power and influence. But God uses the powerless to shame the powerful, and He did so by putting a man of great faith on the throne. God wants to use all His people to serve His purposes with a heart like David's.

Application: Pursuing God's Heart

God cultivated the qualities of spirituality, humility, and integrity throughout David's life in four ways:

1. *In solitude*: David spent countless hours alone with God outside with his sheep.
2. *In obscurity*: David showed commitment in the unseen, unappreciated matters of life.
3. *In monotony*: David remained faithful to God—day by day—in his mundane routine.
4. *In reality*: David maintained a consistent, authentic relationship with God.

How do you sense God working in the solitude, obscurity, monotony, and reality of your present situation?
How is God shaping you into the person of spirituality, humility, and integrity He has called you to be?

It's in the little things we prove ourselves capable for the big things. When God develops inner qualities, He's never in a hurry. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Christians historically have strengthened their relationship with God through the practice of spiritual disciplines: prayer, Scripture memorization, fasting, solitude, and many others. How can you incorporate one of these disciplines into your routine this week to cultivate in your life the attributes of spirituality, humility, and integrity?

David is one of the greatest role models because he understood that God looks at the heart. He allowed this truth to guide his entire life. Even when no one knew his name, David maintained an intimate relationship with God, and God used this time of obscurity to prepare David for great things to come. God wants to use you to do great things for His Son and His kingdom too—even if no one ever knows your name.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I praise You because You are more concerned with the state of my heart than my outward appearance. Please use my seasons of obscurity to cultivate in me the characteristics of spirituality, humility, and integrity as I seek to pursue Your heart. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*, Great Lives from God's Word (Dallas: Word, 1997), xii.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

