

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SIX

Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

I'll tell you, when every one of your crutches is removed, things begin to erode. As the erosion continues, you begin to think differently. And then you begin to lose sight of the truth. And then you hit bottom. But God will hold you up.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IF you've ever broken a leg, you know firsthand the immense value of a crutch. A crutch did what your broken leg couldn't. If you wanted to walk, you needed your crutch. If you removed it, in a matter of moments, you would have found yourself facedown on the pavement.

Every human being will rely on crutches for support throughout life—not necessarily because of a broken leg but because of a broken soul. Sin leads many to mold God's good gifts like successful careers, financial security, or loving mates into crutches for the soul. While these crutches and others are common and socially acceptable, they eventually will crack and buckle under the weight of a person's soul. Those who cling to them will only crumble with them . . .

But there is a crutch, a lone crutch, strong enough to support the soul.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at David's painful season where God kicked out every broken crutch, one by one, from his life. Then, we'll consider who is the unbreaking support, the one perfect crutch we can always lean on when the weight of life is too great to bear.



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S6
1

Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



PREPARE YOUR HEART

First Samuel 18–21 discusses Saul’s mission to kill David. While he was running, David wrote psalms about the weight of his circumstances. As you prepare to read about these events, offer to God the words of *Psalms 59:1–4*.

*Rescue me from my enemies, O God.
Protect me from those who have come to destroy me.
Rescue me from these criminals;
save me from these murderers.
They have set an ambush for me.
Fierce enemies are out there waiting, LORD,
though I have not sinned or offended them.
I have done nothing wrong,
yet they prepare to attack me.
Wake up! See what is happening and help me!*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

After David slayed the Philistine giant, Goliath, he became an overnight celebrity in Israel. His continued success in combat led the people to write a song about him (1 Samuel 18:7):

*Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands!*

As you might imagine, King Saul did not like seeing his glory given to a shepherd boy. While David’s popularity grew so also did Saul’s jealousy of him. This jealousy would lead Saul to do anything to stop David’s rise to power. Saul’s fierce pursuit of David, beginning in 1 Samuel 18, kickstarts David’s crutch-kicking season. *How would he respond?*



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Observation: David's Crutches Removed

Read *1 Samuel 19:8–22; 20:1–4, 30–33, 41–42; 21:10–14* and keep track of the supports David lost. Also, pay special attention to those areas where the text says that David “fled” or “escaped.”

David's First Crutch—1 Samuel 19:8–10

Once Saul's jealousy had been aroused, he had one goal: to kill David. His first attack occurred in *1 Samuel 18:10–12*. Despite Saul's act of malice, David remained in service to the king. However, David wouldn't stick around for more murder attempts!

What event recorded in *19:8* precipitated Saul's assault on David in *19:9*? If this was the *external* reason for Saul's attack, what was in the *internal* reason according to *19:9*? See also *16:14*.

According to *19:10*, how did David respond to Saul's attempt to take his life?



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

David's Second Crutch—1 Samuel 19:11–17

Because of David's victory over Goliath, Saul gave David his daughter Michal in marriage—just as Saul had promised according to *1 Samuel 17:25* (see also *18:17–30*). According to *19:12–14*, what did Michal do to protect David from Saul's attack?

David's Third Crutch—1 Samuel 19:18–22; 20:1

According to *1 Samuel 19:18–22*, what events happened while David was with Samuel that allowed him to flee from Saul in *20:1*?



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

David's Fourth Crutch—1 Samuel 20:1–4, 30–33, 41–42

Next, David met up with his good friend Jonathan, another of Saul's children. At first, Jonathan didn't believe his own father would want to kill David, so Jonathan and David devised a plan to uncover Saul's intentions. In your own words, summarize what Saul said to Jonathan in *1 Samuel 20:30–31* when his son mentioned David. What did this response lead David to do in *20:41–42*?

David's Fifth Crutch—1 Samuel 21:10–14

When David seemed to have nowhere else to turn, he fled to Gath, home of the Philistines and Goliath. What did David do in *1 Samuel 21:13* to protect himself from the threat of the king of Gath?

David lost his position in the king's court. He ran from Saul and then lost the companionship of his beloved wife, spiritual mentor, and best friend. To make things worse, he forfeited all his dignity. It seemed as though David had nothing and no one. But he did have God, who would remain the source of his strength as he fled Saul's relentless pursuit.



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Interpretation: The Truth about Crutches

Only once observation is complete can a student of the Scriptures consider what the passage means and extract timeless theological truths based on this meaning.¹ Pastor Chuck Swindoll identifies three principles in this account of David losing his crutches.

1. *Crutches become substitutes for God.*
2. *Crutches keep one's focus horizontal rather than vertical.*
3. *Crutches provide only temporary relief.*

How do you see each of these three principles on display in David's life as he ran from Saul? List some specific examples from the passages discussed in the observation section.

Write your own timeless principle about crutches based on this account of David and Saul.

God doesn't give temporary relief. He offers a permanent solution. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Correlation: Leaning on God

David's son Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Thankfully, God preserved much of his wisdom in the book of Proverbs. One of these proverbs addresses the topic of crutches.

Read [Proverbs 3:5–6](#). What crutch does this proverb warn against leaning upon? Why do you think the proverb focuses specifically on this crutch? (Hint: remember who wrote this proverb!)

According to this proverb, what—or whom—should someone lean on after removing this dangerous crutch? What promise does this proverb offer those who lean appropriately?

Knowledge represents one particularly dangerous crutch that can replace a Christ-follower's dependence on God, but it isn't the only one. Application of these passages requires a careful look at one's own life to consider what crutches one might be using instead of God.



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21



Application: “Leaning” Lessons for Broken Souls

Based on his study of the account of Saul’s murderous pursuit of David, Pastor Chuck developed two applications about leaning on God:

1. *There is nothing wrong with leaning as long as you’re leaning on God.* Yes, David had the support of his loved ones, but he placed all his trust in God. When all his other crutches failed, God was there to hold David up.
2. *Being stripped of all substitutes for God is the most painful of all.* David may have relied on God, but that didn’t mean the loss of the support system around him was easy. He needed God all the more to carry him through that difficult time.

What crutches do you tend to reach for when you feel yourself collapsing under the weight of life?

Have you ever had an experience like David’s when the crutches you once leaned on so heavily were completely stripped away from you? How did God support you through this experience?



Every Crutch Removed

1 Samuel 18–21

What would it look like for you to toss away these easily broken crutches and lean wholly on God? In the space below, write down a few practical steps you can take today.

David endured the difficult experience of having every last crutch stripped from his grasp. When nothing was left, the only one he could lean on was God. If you find yourself in this painful crutch-kicking season, shift all your weight to lean into and onto Christ, your eternal support. You'll never, ever regret it!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for being the support that never fails. Help me identify those crutches I tend to lean on too heavily. Though the process may be painful, I ask You to teach me to rely on You alone. I trust You, and I believe You will always hold me up. Help me remember this truth. I pray in Jesus' unfailing name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. 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](#)."

