

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWENTY-ONE

Being Big Enough to Forgive

2 Samuel 16:5–13; 19:16–23

My desire in going through the life of David is not just to give you the historical scoop on his life so you walk away with a notebook full of facts. My desire is to have you see yourself in David's shoes so you begin to emulate some of his godly qualities, one of which is forgiveness.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

JESUS once said, “But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love” (*Luke 7:47*). Conversely, a person who is forgiven much shows much love . . . and much forgiveness.

When your thoughtless words or careless actions assault those you hold dear, seeing their pain can produce in your soul the poison of guilt that will gradually eat you alive. The only antidote is forgiveness. Any experience of forgiveness will remain with you, and the next time someone hurts you, you will more freely offer him or her the same remedy of forgiveness.

King David was poisoned by guilt for taking Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah, but he longed for healing. When David finally confessed his sin, God fully cured him of his guilt, and the prophet Nathan proclaimed, “Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you” (*2 Samuel 12:13*).

Now that David was healed, he would never be the same. Despite his renewed gracious attitude toward others, many still mistreated him. In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, David becomes the offended. Did the Lord's therapy enable him to forgive as he had been forgiven?



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Scripture contains few images of forgiveness more beautiful than those preserved in *Psalm 103:10–12*. Pray these words from David as you prepare your heart for what God wants to teach you about forgiveness today.

*He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.
For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.
He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The consequences of David's sin produced a great deal of domestic discord for his family. Specifically, his son Absalom held him in great contempt and conspired to steal the throne. Eventually, Absalom's conspiracy gave birth to a full-blown rebellion that forced David to escape from Jerusalem.

Amid Absalom's pursuit, David encountered a stranger who caused serious problems for David. Turn now to *2 Samuel 16:5–13* and *19:16–23* to see how David handled this situation.



Observation: Resisting and Embracing Forgiveness

Pastor Chuck Swindoll doesn't develop his life-changing applications from his own imagination. Instead, the branches of application always find their roots firmly planted in careful observation of Scripture.

In his studies, Pastor Chuck always looks for contrasts—words, ideas, and characters that are “unlike” another.¹ As you observe these passages, pay careful attention to the contrast between David's attitude and that of his commander Abishai.



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Shimei's Offense—2 Samuel 16:5–13

As David escaped from Jerusalem, he encountered a man named Shimei from Saul's extended family. According to *2 Samuel 16:6–7*, what did Shimei do and say to David as he approached?

After witnessing the interactions between David and Shimei, how did Abishai suggest David respond in *16:9*?

How did David respond in *16:10* to Abishai's suggestion? According to *16:11–12*, what reason did he give for his response?



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David's Response—2 Samuel 19:16–23

Eventually, David's top officer Joab killed Absalom and ended the rebellion. On his way back to Jerusalem, David encountered Shimei yet again. According to 2 Samuel 19:16–18a, how did Shimei treat David differently the second time they met?

What request did Shimei make of David in 19:18b–20? How does this request explain his change in attitude toward David?

How did Abishai respond to Shimei in 19:21? How did David's response in 19:22–23 differ from Abishai's?

Do you know why David could forgive? First, his vertical focus never got out of sync. And second, he was very much aware of his own failure. You know who make good forgivers? The forgiven. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Interpretation: The Remedy of Forgiveness

David wasn't obligated to extend mercy to Shimei. He could have created an illusion of mercy by responding in one of three disingenuous ways. David could have offered . . .

- *Conditional forgiveness*: "I will forgive you *if* . . ."
- *Partial forgiveness*: "I will forgive you, *but* . . ."
- *Delayed forgiveness*: "I will forgive you *later* . . ."

Why might David have been tempted to show this kind of inauthentic "forgiveness" to Shimei? What did David's merciful response communicate to Shimei, to Abishai, and to the people of Israel?

An important part of forgiveness is understanding the motives behind the actions of the person who hurt you. Put yourself in Shimei's sandals. Why do you think he chose to assault David with his words? See [2 Samuel 16:5, 8](#) and [Constable's Notes](#) at netbible.org for additional context.



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How does forgiveness heal both the sinner and the victim? How do you see this healing occurring in both Shimei and David in this account?

You take a downward plunge when you don't forgive. First, there is an offense. Then if there isn't forgiveness, there is resentment. Following resentment is hatred. Then hatred leads to a grudge. And finally a grudge settles in revenge. It's amazing how much of this goes on in the family of Christians . . . just amazing. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: How Often Should I Forgive?

During King Jesus' earthly ministry, His disciples asked Him, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" (*Matthew 18:1*). Jesus answered this brief question with a long sermon, and He makes a clear point at the end of His message: Those who forgive are greatest in Jesus' kingdom.

But Peter had a burning question: What's the cutoff point? How many times does a brother or sister need to hurt me before I stop forgiving?

According to *18:22*, how many times did Jesus say someone should forgive? (Hint: His answer is a figure of speech. If you want guidance in interpreting Jesus' words, consult your *Bible study tools*.)



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Jesus explained Himself through a parable. Summarize Jesus' parable in *Matthew 18:23–35*. Who are the main characters? What is the sequence of events? What are the characters' attitudes at different points in the story?

In your own words, summarize the point of Jesus' parable. What does this account teach about God's forgiveness of those who trust in Jesus Christ and about believers' forgiveness of one another?

Jesus has cancelled the enormous debt of sin for those who place their trust in Him. By comparison, the wrongs His children commit against one another seem like small change. This parable leads citizens of the kingdom of heaven to think, *If Jesus has forgiven me in the big things, I certainly can forgive others in the small things.*



Application: Learning to Forgive

Forgiving is hard. Jesus and David may make it seem easy, but even they would likely admit how difficult it is to let an offense go. Based on David's forgiveness of Shimei, Pastor Chuck offers four tips for those struggling to forgive.

1. *Cultivate a thick skin.* Shimei's words could have cut David to the heart, but these insults didn't hurt him because he knew God had chosen him to replace Saul.
2. *Try to understand where the offender is coming from.* David looked beyond Shimei's offense and peered into his heart and mind. That takes grace!



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3. *Recall times in your life when you needed forgiveness.* David remembered how he felt begging God for forgiveness, and he applied that same emotion through compassion.
4. *Verbalize your forgiveness.* David swore to Shimei, “Your life will be spared.” Though Shimei deserved death, David forgave him—*out loud*—and offered him life.

“I forgive you.” Those words are marvelous therapy. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In the space below, write about a time you experienced forgiveness from a loved one.

An unforgiving spirit can lead to resentment, hatred, grudges, and revenge. Have you witnessed this downward spiral in others . . . or even in yourself?

Is there someone in your life from whom you’ve withheld forgiveness? What reasons have you given yourself for not forgiving? How would extending openhanded forgiveness to this person benefit both you personally and the person who hurt you?



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David had been forgiven much, so he was able to forgive much. This account of David is more than a mere example. Rather, it is a roadmap because all who have placed their faith in Jesus have received forgiveness for an insurmountable debt. Remember His mercy today, and allow it to strengthen you as you offer forgiveness to others.



A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, write your own prayer to God. Ask Him to remind you of His forgiveness. And if someone in your life needs your forgiveness, ask for the strength to show mercy. But don't leave forgiveness at the altar. Go to the person, verbalize your forgiveness, and delight in the healing that God's mercy has offered you both.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 101.



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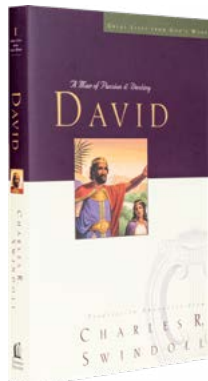
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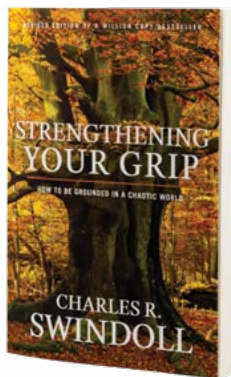
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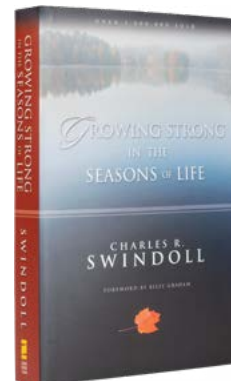
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2022 broadcasts of *David: A Man of Passion & Destiny*, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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