

5 WEEKS



DAVID

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART



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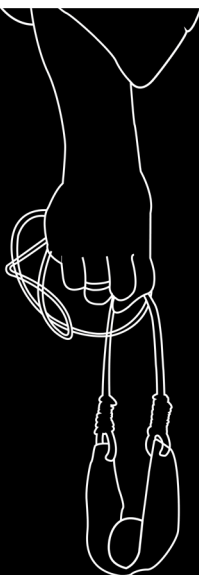
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THE RELUCTANT HERO

week 1

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Who is your greatest hero and why?

Big Idea:

David went from humble shepherd to national hero to great king. But he wasn't great because of his reputation or military prowess. He was great because of where he'd learned to place his hope.

Key Scriptures:

Psalms 25:1-5

"In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."

Discussion:

1. Read together out loud the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. What stands out most to you about this story?
2. Compare and contrast the actions of King Saul vs. David when it comes to their response to Goliath's defiance of the God of Israel. What do you suppose each of their actions reveal about their trust in God?
3. In what people and things are we tempted to place our hope? What are some of the dangers of trusting those people or things?
4. Read Psalm 25:1–5. What are some things that make it difficult for you to trust God?
5. We learn from David's story that those whose hope is in the Lord see clearly, act confidently, and walk humbly. To what extent do you need to increase the clarity, confidence, and humility in your life?
6. What is one thing you can do this week to grow your trust in God?
7. How can this group support you?

Wrapping It Up:

Each day this week, consider praying the words of David's Psalm that follows.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our student SWERVE team (students who serve) as they engage in using their gifts serving the church in various ways.

Memory Verse:

*"In you,
Lord my
God, I put
my trust . . .
My hope is
in you all
day long."*

PSALM 25:1,5



KILLER GIANTS

week 2

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

When are you most drawn to God?

Big Idea:

The way of God is most unappealing when we're angry, isolated or afraid.

Key Scriptures:

1 Samuel 20:30-33

"Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, 'You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!'" "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David."

1 Samuel 21:10-13

"That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, 'Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances:' 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'?" David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard."

Psalms 9:9

"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."

Matthew 11:28-29

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Discussion:

1. Read 1 Samuel 20:30-33 and 21:10-13. These passages describe a season in David's life when Saul's jealousy so overcame him that he would seek to kill David, despite all he had done for him and for the nation of Israel. And the boy who once ran into danger rather than from it, now found himself running in fear. In David's fear, anger and loneliness, he lost his faith and confidence in God for a season and behaved in ways that would bring great regret and cost. Have you ever faced a season of fear, anger or loneliness that caused you to run away from God instead of to Him? What happened?
2. Talk about a time when you, like David, made a decision motivated by anger, isolation, or fear. What were the consequences?
3. What regrets or cost ensued during that time?
4. What is one thing you've learned from that season?
5. Read Psalm 9:9. When you face times of trouble, are

- the words of this Psalm difficult for you to believe?
6. What is one area of life in which you are tempted to rely on your own talents, skills, and ingenuity rather than on God?
 7. What stands in the way of you relying on your heavenly Father in that area? Why or why not?
 8. Read Matthew 11:28-29. What burden are you carrying right now? What is one thing you can do to find rest in God?
 9. How can this group support you?

Wrapping It Up:

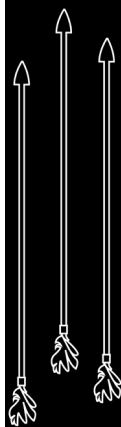
When your circumstances make you angry, isolated, or afraid, don't run from God. Remember his faithfulness. He has not forsaken you. Surrender your burden to him. Let him give you rest.

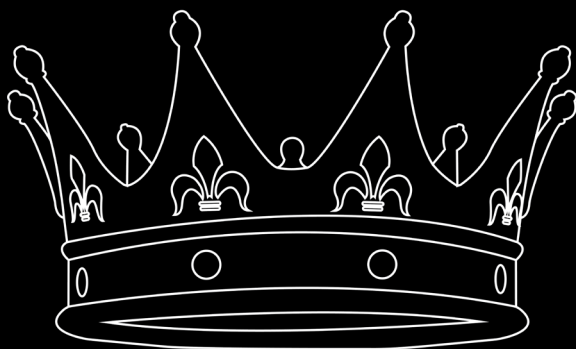
Prayer Focus:

Pray for those in DivorceCare who are looking to God's strength in this season of difficulty in their lives.

Memory Verse:

"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble." Psalm 9:9





THE ABIGAIL WAY

week 3

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Describe a time when you “got even” with someone who harmed you.

Big Idea:

The problem with getting even is that it makes you even, and it makes you even with someone you don’t even like.

Key Scriptures:

1 Samuel 25

“Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Paran. A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings—he was a Calebite. While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’” Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were

at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.”

When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited. Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?” David’s men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. David said to his men, “Each of you strap on your sword!” So they did, and David strapped his on as well. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, “David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole

household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.” Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!” When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said: “Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent. And now, my lord, as surely as the Lord your God lives and as you live, since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging

1 SAMUEL 25 (CONT.)

yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you. "Please forgive your servant's presumption. The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the Lord's battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. When the Lord has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant." David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male

belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak." Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request." When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until daybreak. Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife." She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "I am your servant and am ready to serve you and wash the feet of my lord's servants." Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five female servants, went with David's messengers and became his wife. David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to

Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim."

Proverbs 17:13 *"Evil will never leave the house of one who pays back evil for good."*

Discussion:

1. Read aloud together as a group 1 Samuel 25. Discuss David's response to Nabal's snub and mistreatment, and how Abigail's wisdom protected David from a very foolish decision.
2. David was blinded by his anger in being mistreated by Nabal. Have you ever been similarly blinded by your own anger in being mistreated? What happened?
3. Read Proverbs 17:13. How did the truth in this passage show to be true in the life of Nabal?
4. Does the idea of "doing good" to those who wrong you seem realistic? Why or why not?
5. "Until you return good for evil, the person that has mistreated you controls you." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
6. Is there currently a relationship or situation in your life in which you are tempted to get payback?
7. In the future, what story do

you want to tell about this period of your life?

Wrapping It Up:

Freedom is sometimes found when you do for someone what they do not deserve for you to do. Look for ways to return good for evil done to you.

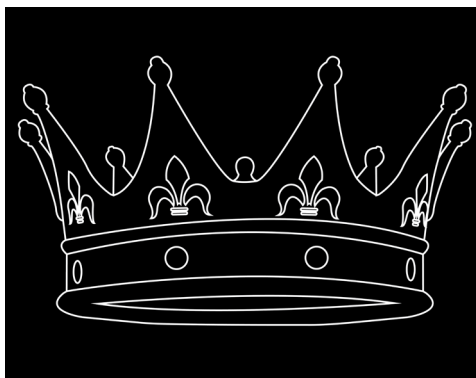
Prayer Focus:

Pray for those participating in the Walk with Me program through the Hope Center to be able to grow in their faith and in their ability to lead sustainable lives. And pray for the coaches that are walking with them.

Memory Verse:

"Evil will never leave the house of one who pays back evil for good."

PROVERBS 17:13





THE GREAT KING

week 4

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Talk about a leader, boss, or coach that was influential in your life. What made them influential?

Big Idea:

One of the greatest indicators of our maturity is how we handle authority, power and influence.

Key Scriptures:

1 Samuel 16:1-13

"The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.' But Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.' The Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to

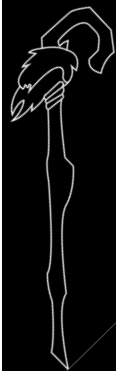
do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.' Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?' Samuel replied, 'Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The Lord has not chosen this one either.' Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel

said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David."

1 Samuel 24:1-13

"After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was

there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way. Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave.



Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the LORD's anointed.' See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you."

2 Samuel 5:1-5

"All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the Lord said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'" When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years

old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years."

Discussion:

1. Read the account of David's anointing as a teenager in 1 Samuel 16:1-13. What do you learn about the one God had chosen to be leader over His people?
2. It would be another 15 years before David would actually become king over Israel after being anointed by Samuel. Read 1 Samuel 24:1-13 of David's actions when given an opportunity to kill Saul who was trying to kill him. What do you learn about David's heart?
3. David refused to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed despite the fact that he had been anointed by God himself. What does this show you about David's belief in God's will, in God's way, and in God's time?
4. Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5. In God's time, David was finally anointed king over all Israel. What does the length and breadth of his journey to

this milestone teach you about God?

5. Perhaps the greatest reflection of our individual maturity is what we do with our influence, power, and authority. Was there a time when you were given authority and didn't lead well? What happened?
6. How have you seen leaders put others' needs before their own? What kind of results did you see in the group of people they led?
7. In which situation (at work or at home) is it most difficult to practice humility? In what area of your life do you currently have authority?
8. What is one thing you can do this week to leverage your power for the benefit of those you have the opportunity to lead?

Wrapping It Up:

Look for a way to leverage the power, the authority, and the influence you've been given for the benefit of the other people in the room. That's what your Savior did for you.

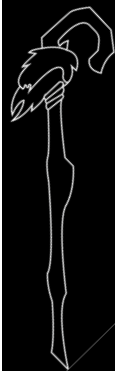
Prayer Focus:

Pray for our leaders that they will lead like Jesus leads.

Memory Verse:

"The Lord
does not
look at
the things
people look
at. People
look at
the outward
appearance,
but the
Lord looks
at the
heart."

1 SAMUEL 16:7



WHEN DREAMS CAN'T COME TRUE

week 5

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is one of your biggest dreams that never came true?

Big Idea:

It's always a mistake to wrap our faith in God around the fulfillment of our dreams or the answers to our prayers. Dreams that don't come true say nothing about the goodness of God.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 19:21

"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Discussion:

1. Life rarely goes as planned, and in David's life that was certainly true. His life was full of victories and defeats, promises fulfilled and consequences that afflicted. Read Proverbs 19:21. Discuss a situation in which things worked out very differently than you expected or planned. Was the outcome positive or negative?
2. Has someone you know ever gotten what you wanted? What happened?
3. Have you ever felt like God promised or owed you something, only to find that your dream would never come true? If so, how did you respond?
4. "Dreams that don't come true say nothing of God's faithfulness or activity." Is that difficult to believe? Why or why not?
5. Read Jeremiah 29:11. Is there a dream you have that hasn't come true? If so, how could placing your trust and hope in God help you make peace with your unfulfilled dream?

Wrapping It Up:

When things don't go your way, remember that ultimately, it is God's purpose that prevails.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our new members class as they meet these next couple of weeks.

Memory Verse:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?

Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



SUNNYBROOK
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