

DAVID

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Small Group Guide: David, Week 5

Key Takeaways:

1. **God has a specific way for us to approach Him, we cannot do it our own way.** In the Old Testament, it was through the priests and sacrifices. Today, it's through Jesus Christ alone.
2. **Rebellion against God's authority is as serious as witchcraft.** When we disobey God's clear commands, we are rejecting His authority over our lives.
3. **The difference between being rejected and accepted by God often lies in our response to conviction.** Do we make excuses or do we immediately confess?
4. **Impatience leads to disobedience.** Waiting on God's timing requires trust in His sovereignty and goodness.
5. **Being "after God's own heart" means consistently submitting to His authority, even after we fail.** It's about the direction of our heart, not perfection.

Discussion Questions:

Icebreaker Question

1. Share about a time when you had to wait for something important. How did you handle the waiting? What did you learn from that experience?

Understanding Saul's Decline

1. **What were the three major mistakes that led to Saul's rejection by God?** How did each one demonstrate a deeper heart issue?
2. **Why was Saul's offering of the sacrifice (1 Samuel 13) such a serious offense to God?** What does this teach us about doing things "our way" versus "God's way"?
3. **Pastor Allen stated that "Saul cared more about what the troops wanted than pleasing God."** Where do you see people-pleasing affecting decisions in our culture today? In your own life?

Comparing Saul and David

1. **Both Saul and David sinned seriously, yet God's response to them was different.** What were the three key differences between Saul and David mentioned in the sermon?
2. **Read 2 Samuel 12:13. What impresses you about David's immediate response when confronted by Nathan?** How does this contrast with Saul's responses when confronted by Samuel?
3. **What does it mean that David was "a man after God's own heart"?** Does this mean he was sinless? What does it actually mean?

Authority and Obedience

1. **Pastor Allen's sermon emphasized that "obedience is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22).** What does this mean practically in our daily Christian walk?
2. **Saul treated God's authority as secondary to his own authority as king.** How do we sometimes treat God's authority as secondary to our own desires or plans?
3. **Discuss the difference between a "moral lapse in judgment" and "rejection of God's authority."** Why is this distinction important?

Practical Application:

1. **When have you been impatient like Saul and taken matters into your own hands instead of waiting on God?** What was the result?
2. **How do you typically respond when confronted about sin: are you more like Saul (making excuses, deflecting blame) or more like David (immediate confession)?** What needs to change?
3. **Saul consulted forbidden spiritual sources when God wouldn't answer him. What "forbidden sources" might we be tempted to consult today when we don't get answers from God?** (Consider: horoscopes, fortune-tellers, seeking guidance from ungodly counsel, etc.)
4. **Quick Confession:** When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin this week, practice David's immediate response: "I have sinned against the Lord." Don't make excuses or deflect blame.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for what we've learned from the lives of Saul and David. As we reflect on their stories, give us hearts that are quick to confess our sin rather than trying to justify it. Teach us to be patient and to trust Your timing, choosing to do things Your way instead of our own. Give us the courage to submit to Your authority in every area of our lives, and fill us with grace so that when we are confronted about sin, we respond with humility. Protect us, Lord, from seeking guidance from any source that does not honor You. Instead, draw us closer to You this week and help us walk faithfully in Your presence.

In Jesus' name, amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: Obedience Over Sacrifice

Reading: 1 Samuel 15:22-23; 1 John 1:8-9

Devotional: God values our obedience far more than our religious performances. When Samuel confronted Saul, he declared a timeless truth: "To obey is better than sacrifice." We can fill our lives with spiritual activities: attending church, giving offerings, serving in ministry yet miss what God truly desires: a surrendered heart that follows His commands. Saul's downfall wasn't a lack of religious activity; it was his persistent choice to do things his way instead of God's way. Today, examine your heart. Are there areas where you're substituting religious activity for simple obedience? God isn't looking for your excuses or justifications; He's looking for your humble confession and willing submission. When we confess our disobedience, He is faithful to forgive and restore us.

Day 2: Waiting on God's Timing

Reading: 1 Samuel 13:8-14; Psalm 27:14

Devotional: Impatience can cost us God's best. Saul's critical mistake was acting just moments before God's appointed time. He waited six days, but couldn't wait for the seventh. How often do we do the same? We pray, we wait, and just when God is about to move, we take matters into our own hands. Waiting isn't passive; it's active trust. It declares that God's timing is perfect, even when circumstances seem desperate. Saul's army was deserting, the enemy was advancing, yet God still expected him to wait. When

God tells you to wait, He's not testing your patience, He's building your faith. The breakthrough often comes just after our greatest temptation to quit waiting. What has God asked you to wait for? Trust that He will arrive exactly on time.

Day 3: Taking Responsibility for Sin

Reading: 2 Samuel 12:1-13; Psalm 51:1-4

Devotional: The difference between Saul and David wasn't sinlessness, it was responsiveness to conviction. When confronted, Saul made excuses, blamed others, and justified his actions. David simply said, "I have sinned against the Lord." No excuses. No deflection. Just an honest confession. This is what makes someone "a man after God's own heart", not perfection, but genuine repentance. We live in a culture of blame-shifting and justification, but God calls us to own our failures. When the Holy Spirit convicts you, resist the urge to explain away your sin or minimize its impact. Don't compare yourself to others or list your good deeds as a counterbalance. Simply confess. God's forgiveness flows freely to the humble heart that takes full responsibility. Confession isn't just admitting what you did; it's agreeing with God about the seriousness of your sin.

Day 4: Submitting to God's Authority

Reading: Deuteronomy 18:10-12; James 4:7-10

Devotional: Saul's tragic end came when he sought spiritual guidance from forbidden sources. When God wouldn't answer him, instead of repenting and returning to obedience, he consulted a necromancer, directly violating God's command. This reveals the heart of rebellion: when we don't get what we want from God, we seek it elsewhere. Today, people consult horoscopes, psychics, and spiritual mediums, thinking it's harmless. But these practices open doors to demonic influence and demonstrate a rejection of God's authority. God's silence isn't permission to seek answers from other sources; it's often an invitation to examine our hearts and return to obedience. When you face unanswered prayers, resist the temptation to bypass God's authority. Submit yourself to Him, draw near with humility, and trust that His silence has purpose. He may be waiting for your heart to fully surrender.

Day 5: A Heart That Stays Tender

Reading: 1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:10-12

Devotional: The saddest words in Saul's story are these: "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul." What began with God's anointing ended in God's absence. Repeated disobedience and unrepentance hardened Saul's heart until God's Spirit withdrew. This should awaken holy fear in every believer. We must guard our hearts against the gradual drift into rebellion. Sin unchecked becomes sin defended. David sinned grievously, yet God's Spirit remained with him because he kept a tender, repentant heart. Ask God today to create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. Don't let familiarity with God breed presumption. Don't let success inflate your ego. Don't let disappointment drive you to forbidden sources. Keep your heart soft before God through regular confession, worship, and submission to His Word. A tender heart is a protected heart.