



DAVID

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Small Group Guide: David, Week 15

Key Takeaways:

1. Fear drives people into situations they never would have chosen with a clear head. David fled to Gath, the hometown of Goliath, carrying Goliath's own sword, a decision that made no logical sense and nearly cost him his life.
2. The three primary causes of most self-destructive decisions are fear, greed, and lust. Recognizing these forces at work is the first step toward resisting them.
3. God speaks to his people through the Spirit he placed within them. The knower, the conscience, and the capacity for fellowship with God are all available to every believer. Developing these through prayer and Bible reading is the primary safeguard against fear-driven decisions.

4. God does not build his kingdom with just the wise, the powerful, or the wealthy. He builds it with the distressed, the indebted, and the bitter people the world overlooks.
5. The difficult seasons of leadership, like David's time in the cave, are not detours from God's purpose. They are preparation for it.

Discussion Questions:

Opening Question

1. Think of a time when fear pushed you into a decision you later regretted. You do not have to share the details, but what did that experience feel like in the moment?

Diving Into the Text

1. **David arrived in Gath carrying Goliath's sword, one of the most recognizable weapons in the region, and was immediately identified by the officers of King Achish.** What does this tell you about the way fear can blind us to obvious dangers right in front of us?
2. **Pastor Allen points out that Achish's officers were not whispering their concerns. They said everything out loud.** Read 1 Samuel 21:10-12 together. How do you think David felt in that moment? What do you think was going through his mind?
3. **David's act of pretending to be insane worked because the surrounding culture believed that madness was connected to the spiritual world.** What does it tell you about David that he was able to think creatively and act quickly even in the middle of a panic?

4. **Proverbs 29:25 teaches that the fear of man sets a trap, but trusting God brings safety.** Where do you see this principle at work in David's experience at Gath?
5. **The three groups that came to David at the cave of Adullam were the distressed, the indebted, and the discontented/bitter.** Why do you think these particular men were drawn to David rather than to someone more established or powerful?
6. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 together.** How does this passage reframe the way you think about your own qualifications or lack of them for being used by God?
7. **David's time at the cave is described as simultaneously a low point and a high point.** How can a single season in life be both of those things at the same time? Have you ever experienced that tension personally?

Going Deeper

1. **Pastor Allen identifies three root causes of most self-destructive decisions: fear, greed, and lust.** Which of these do you find most difficult to recognize in yourself before it leads to a bad decision? Why?
2. **The sermon describes three components of the human spirit: the knower, where God speaks; the conscience, which tells us right from wrong; and the capacity for fellowship, where we sense God's presence.** Which of these feels most alive in your own life right now? Which feels most dormant?
3. **David was approximately 16 or 17 years old when hardened, older men chose to follow him at the cave of Adullam.** What qualities do you think made them

willing to submit to someone so much younger? What does this suggest about what people are really looking for in a leader?

Practical Application:

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Identify a decision you are currently facing that may be driven by fear rather than faith.** Write it down. Then write down what you believe you would decide if fear were completely removed from the equation. Bring that to God in prayer.
2. **Set aside 10 to 15 minutes each day this week for quiet, unhurried prayer -- not a list of requests, but simply listening.** Practice paying attention to what Pastor Allen called “the knower” within your spirit.
3. **Think of someone in your life who fits the description of the distressed, the indebted, or the bitter.** Consider one practical way you could offer them hope, presence, or leadership this week.
4. **Reflect honestly on whether fear, greed, or lust has been driving any of your recent decisions.** Confess that specifically to God and ask him to replace it with trust.

Closing Reflection

The cave of Adullam was not where David expected to be. It was dark, hidden, and humbling. But it was exactly where God was building something. The men who found David there were not the kind of men anyone would have chosen for a kingdom. But God chose them anyway.

If your life feels more like a cave than a palace right now, you are in good company. And you may be closer to the foundation of something great than you realize.

Closing Prayer:

Lord,

Thank You that You use ordinary, broken, unlikely people for Your purposes.

Thank You that our weakness does not disqualify us, but can become a place where Your strength is displayed. Help us be honest about the ways fear, greed, or lust have been shaping our choices, and give us courage to repent and trust You instead. Make us more sensitive to Your voice through Your Spirit. Through our conscience, our fellowship with You, and the quiet knowing You place within us. For anyone in a cave season, bring hope and protection, and remind them You are still forming them.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: When Fear Makes Us Run

Reading: 1 Samuel 21:10-15

Devotional: David fled to Gath in a panic, carrying Goliath's sword into the very city of his greatest enemy. Fear had overridden wisdom. Proverbs 29:25 warns that the fear of man sets a trap for us, but trusting God brings safety. How often do we make rash decisions driven by fear rather than faith? The same God who guided David through enemy territory guides you through your most desperate moments. Fear is not a signal to run blindly. It is an invitation to stop, pray, and trust the One who already knows the way forward. What fear is currently driving your decisions? Bring it honestly before God today.

Day 2: God Builds With Broken People

Reading: 1 Samuel 22:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Devotional: The men who gathered to David in the cave of Adullam were distressed, indebted, and bitter. They were not the polished, the powerful, or the privileged. Yet God used David to transform these wounded men into the foundation of a kingdom. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 that God consistently chooses what the world overlooks in order to accomplish what the world cannot explain. If you feel disqualified by your past, your debts, your failures, or your bitterness, take heart. You are precisely the kind of person God delights to use for his purposes. Do you believe God can use you in your current condition, not after you have cleaned yourself up?

Day 3: The Cave Before the Crown

Reading: Psalm 142; Romans 8:18

Devotional: Before David ever wore a crown, he cried out to God from a cave. Psalm 142 captures the rawness of that moment, a man with no refuge except God himself. David did not pretend the suffering was not real. He brought it honestly and fully to God. Romans 8:18 reminds us that present suffering does not compare to the glory that will be revealed. The cave is not the end of the story. It is where character is formed, where dependence on God deepens, and where future leaders are quietly prepared. Your cave has a purpose. What cave are you currently in? Have you brought your full, honest cry to God about it?

Day 4: The Voice of God in the Wilderness

Reading: John 10:27; Psalm 63:1

Devotional: David spent years as a fugitive in the wilderness, yet his psalms from that period reveal a man who was not spiritually distant from God. He was deeply attentive to the voice and presence of God. Jesus declares in John 10:27 that his sheep hear his voice and follow him. This capacity to hear God is not reserved for prophets or pastors. It is built into every believer. But like any relationship, it requires time, attention, and quiet. The wilderness strips away distraction and creates the conditions for listening. What God speaks in the wilderness often shapes everything that follows. How much of your time with God is spent talking versus listening? What might he be trying to say to you in a quiet moment today?

Day 5: Unlikely Leaders, Unshakable Kingdom

Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Devotional: David was a teenager leading bitter, broken men in a cave. By the world's standards, none of it made sense. Yet God was building something through those years that no human strategy could have constructed. Paul understood this principle deeply, writing in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 that God's strength is made perfect in weakness, and that when we are weak, then we are strong in Him. The kingdom of God has always advanced through people who had nothing left to offer except their availability. Your weakness is not a disqualification. It is the very place where God's power is most clearly displayed.

Where in your life are you trying to compensate for weakness through your own effort rather than surrendering that weakness to God?