

Life with Limits
Growth Group Discussion Guide
1 Kings 1

Intro questions

- What is one “limitation” that you have experienced, which you would like to do away with?
- Take a moment to pray, asking for God’s Spirit to lead your discussion.

1. Read 1 Kings 1:1-53. This is a long section, so take turns reading. Try to take in the plotline, and notice the details that the narrator brings out.

- What do you think is the primary truth that the narrator—inspired by the Holy Spirit—wants to bring out from this moment in David’s life? Another way of asking the question is, why does the narrator include these particular details? Encourage your group members to flesh out the possibilities.
 - Do you think that there is anything pertinent to your own life in this over-arching theme, which you would like to discuss and apply?
- Note from Pastor Josh: *My own answer to the question above would be something like, “**God is faithful to keep his promise to David in spite of David’s imperfect parenting, inactive leadership, and human limitations.**” I chose not to focus on this big idea in Sunday’s sermon mostly because it seemed to be a repeat of what we saw the previous Sunday. And I saw a lesser, but nonetheless poignant theme running through the chapter, which I felt we need to focus on. Your own group is welcome to run with the bigger idea, or the one which I covered in Sunday’s sermon (below).*

2. The question that Josh focused on in Sunday’s sermon was this: **How are we to view the human limitations that permeate our lives?** Discuss, using the questions that follow.

- Eugene Peterson, in Leap Over a Wall¹, says, “Our attempts to be more than human or other than human...result in our becoming less than human.”
 - What kind of “attempts to be more than human” is Peterson talking about?
 - How might these attempts make us “less than human?”
 - Do you agree or disagree?
- What aspects of David’s humanity, complete with limitations, do we see on display in 1 Kings 1? Bring out as many as you see in the story.
- Josh stated that David’s servants saw his inability to keep warm **only as a problem to be solved.**
 - How did the servants believe that Abishag would provide a solution to this problem?
 - How does Abishag’s value prove to be even greater than the servants expected?
 - What is the problem with viewing human limitations—ours or someone else’s—only as a problem to be solved? (Think of some actual examples where this principle plays out—in someone dealing with chronic pain, or fatigue, or terminal cancer, etc.).

¹ Peterson’s final chapter on the life of David was the basis for the three insufficient ways of viewing limitations, which were covered in Sunday’s sermon, and referenced here.

- The sermon suggested that Adonijah saw David's limitations as an **opportunity to be seized**.
 - How does this approach play out in the story in 1 Kings 1? What is wrong with Adonijah's approach?
 - How have you seen people take this approach to human limitations? (For example, an adult child who sees his/her parent's declining health as an opportunity for financial gain, etc.)
 - What is wrong with this approach?
 - How might we guard against doing this very thing?
- Josh suggested that Bathsheba saw David's limitations only as a **difficulty to be negotiated**.
 - What was good and right about Bathsheba's actions in this story?
 - What was missing from Bathsheba's interactions with David here?
 - Those of us who are task-oriented can tend to approach other people's weakness and struggle only in a task-oriented way. How might we apply this strength of ours, while also giving care in more personal ways?
- The narrator makes sure to let us know that Abishag remains with David, quietly accompanying and caring for him, in spite of the fact that she didn't play the pragmatic function the servants expected. She remains present throughout the going and coming of Bathsheba, Nathan, Zadok, and Benaiah.
 - What do you think the author wants us to see in her consistent presence with David?

3. Concluding Application

- Pastor Josh argued Sunday that our limitations, and even the inevitability of death, point us to our utter need for Jesus. **The fullest lives embrace the limits of being human.** In other words, the more we embrace these limitations, the more we have the potential to experience the grace of God in Christ.
 - How do you feel about this idea?
 - How might you apply this truth to the limitations you are currently experiencing, in your life or someone else's close to you?
- What will be the most lasting impression or application that you take away from our months of studying the life of David?

4. Prayer

- Spend some time praying about the limitations and struggles that came up, and for God's grace to be revealed in the midst of them.