

**“The Barefoot King”**  
Growth Group Discussion Guide  
2 Samuel 15-16

**Intro questions**

- This week’s sermon began with the story of a man who has chosen to go barefoot for the last 20 years. How do you feel about going barefoot? Do you lean towards: A) Barefoot all the time; B) Never barefoot, ever; or C) Somewhere in between? (If “C,” when do you like to go without shoes?)
- In today’s Bible passage, David went barefoot as a sign of shame and dejection. Before we dive in, take a moment to pray, asking for God’s Spirit to lead your discussion.

**1. Read 2 Samuel 15:1 through 16:14.** It is a long section, so take turns reading. Try to take in the plotline, and notice the details that the narrator brings out.

- Based on this passage, as well as what you know of David’s life prior to this passage, what factors have brought him to this place?
- Aside from David being barefoot, what details give you a hint to his mental, emotional, and spiritual state here?
- What can you observe about David’s faith in God as he exits the city?
- David’s responses to specific challenges here—such as the betrayal of Ahithophel and the cursing of Shimei—are quite surprising. Where does he find the ability to respond in this way? What has taken place in him?
  - How can pain, hardship, and betrayal make you bitter or hard-hearted? Have you ever observed that process happening in yourself? How did you respond?
  - How can we let pain, hardship, and betrayal have the opposite effect?
- What other details, principles, or challenges stuck out to you from the reading?
- Josh pointed out on Sunday that **we lose the life we long for by trying to be God.**
  - Do you think this principle is an accurate reflection of David’s experience? Why or why not?
  - Can you think of specific ways—which you are willing to share—that you have seen this principle in your own experience? Or if not, what are some ways that it could happen?

**2. Read 2 Samuel 18:6-17, then discuss the following.**

- What jumps out at you as being significant in this section of Scripture?
- It is only after Absalom dies that this rebellion and David’s “exile” come to an end. What might God be showing us through this fact?

**3. Multiple commentators have pointed out the similarities between David's journey in this story, and the journey of Jesus just before he goes to the cross.**

- Read, for example, Luke 19:28-44.
  - What similarities between the two “messiahs” (anointed king) do you see here?
  - Do you think that either story—David or Jesus—helps us to understand and interpret the other? How so?
- On Sunday, Josh said that because of our efforts to be God, we have lost what we longed for; but **because Jesus took our curse on the cross, we get it all back and more.**
  - How does this make you feel about Jesus?
  - How does this fact change your approach to what you are currently going through?
  - How do Jesus' actions in our place help us to love and trust him in our current struggles?

**4. Prayer**

- Spend some time thanking and praising Jesus for his sacrifice.
- Pray for one another about any other needs or struggles that have been mentioned.