

In Lesson 16, we studied David's restoration to kingship after Absalom's attempted coup. David was overwhelmed by grief over Absalom to the point he may have lost the kingship. However, Joab stepped in and redirected David to the Lord's calling. David extended grace to many who really deserved punishment, but also made some illogical decisions too. But God was at work despite this. Although tensions ran high, and one Israelite tried to start a revolt against David and Judah, this was quickly squelched, and David was once again restored to leadership over Israel.

With this lesson we enter the final section of the books of Samuel. Most commentators look at this section as an epilogue but disagree whether or not the contents are listed in chronological order. It does appear that this is an appendix of events in the story of David that the author wanted to include before the next ruler of Israel, Solomon, took the throne.¹ It really does not make a significant difference to have the exact timing of these events. The important thing for us is what we can glean in becoming a person after God's heart. Let's turn to that task now as we examine David's confrontations with guilt, restitution, restoration, direct confrontation, and further opposition.

DAY 1

Guilt

2 SAMUEL 21:1-6

Please read 2 Samuel 21:1-6 and answer the following questions.

[1] What did God reveal about the reasons for the three-year famine in Israel (verse 1)?

Note: The timing of this famine is unclear, but it is somewhat possible that it took place shortly after David became king and after Saul's death.²

[2] How did David approach the Gibeonites in view of Israel's guilt (verse 3)?

Note: The Hebrew word for the term *atonement* is *kaphar*, which means "to cover." Literally, it means "to reconcile with, appease, pacify, or purge," and it is actually one of the most important words in the Bible when it comes to dealing with sin.³

[3] What did the Gibeonites really want in view of all that Saul had done to them, and how did David respond to this (verses 4-6)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

Have you faced a time where things seem to be going wrong, and you just can't put your finger on why? That was certainly David's experience, and it is strange that this went on for three years before he knew the reason for it. Perhaps he hadn't really sought the Lord, but only assumed it was just a part of life in their land. When things are unclear, pray and seek the Lord but be prepared for Him to answer!

[1] What are some things that the following passages tell us about seeking God when we are unclear of things that are going on in our lives?

Psalm 139:23–24

Philippians 4:6

James 4:2–3, 5:16

1 John 5:14–15

Daily Life Point: It is interesting that the author of the books of Samuel chose to close the record with two national problems: a drought caused by Saul's sin and a plague caused by David's sin in chapter 24!⁴ This is just more evidence of the law of sowing and reaping that we have seen in our studies this year.

What are some of the things you have learned this year to help you avoid sowing to things that are destructive to sow to the things of the Spirit? Please share some thoughts on how to better do this and discuss them together with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

This week we will memorize Matthew 5:14a, 16. Review the passage several times throughout each day. By the end of the week, you should have it memorized.

You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14a, 16 NKJV)

DAY 2

Restitution **2 SAMUEL 21:7-9**

Please Read 2 Samuel 21:7-9 and answer the following questions.

[1] In agreeing to the terms of the Gibeonites, what did David make sure of (verse 7)?

Note: You'll recall that their covenant was made in 1 Samuel 20.

[2] An accounting is given of the various sons (this word means "descendants," so it could have been sons or grandsons⁵) that were offered up to the Gibeonites in verse 8. What did they do with these men (verse 9)?

Note: Remember, Michal was barren after her scoffing (2 Samuel 6). These sons mentioned were actually those of her sister Merab, the wife of Adriel (1 Samuel 18:19), and evidently Michal raised these sons for him.⁶

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] When David made restitution to the Gibeonites, he was taking steps of reconciliation with Mephibosheth. How does this demonstrate the principles found in Romans 12:16-18?

[2] The beginning of the barley harvest was around April (See Ruth⁷). In a sense, the harvest couldn't come until the penalty had been paid, then the fruit could be borne once the drought had past. In a similar way, what are the only conditions in which our lives can bear real, lasting fruit (See John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:22-25; Colossians 2:13-15)?

Daily Life Point: Restitution was an important part of reconciliation between two offended parties. The Old Testament even commanded for restitution of life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth (See Exodus 21; Leviticus 24). Our sin also required restitution, for we have all sinned against God; thus, we all face the death penalty for our sins. That is what is so amazing about the grace of God: He transferred all of our guilt upon His Son. That restitution has been paid!

Is there anyone who you feel has wronged you and owes you restitution in some sense? Or perhaps you owe something in the way of restitution to another. How can you take a more gracious attitude toward others who have wronged you, as God did toward you? What steps do you need to take in order to get right with someone you have offended?

Please share some thoughts and ask for the prayer support of your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

You are the _____ of the world. . . . Let your light so
_____ before men, that they may see your good works and
_____ your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14a, 16 NKJV)

DAY 3

Restoration
2 SAMUEL 21:10-14

Please Read 2 Samuel 21:10-14 and answer the following questions.

[1] What amazing thing did the mother of two of these men do (verses 10-11)?

[2] What did her actions encourage David to do (verses 12-13)?

[3] What actions brought restoration and healing (verse 14)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] Think through what Rizpah did. She set up a sort of sackcloth tent and fought off the vultures and beasts that would have sought to further defile the bodies of these men, which would have brought more shame in their culture.⁸ The passage does not say that the rain came right away, but she possibly could have kept up her vigil for six months!⁹ Robert Bergen well said of her, "Rizpah represents perhaps the supreme expression of maternal loyalty in the Bible."¹⁰ In view of her actions spurring on others, what did you learn about encouraging others to take steps of faith in following and serving the Lord?

Romans 15:1–2

Colossians 3:16

Hebrews 10:24–25

[2] What else do Matthew 6:5–8 and John 15:7 add about having an effective prayer life?

Daily Life Point: How can you take steps toward a more effective prayer life, so you can enjoy taking part of God's work in the lives of others? Please share some of your thoughts here.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

You are the _____ of the world. . . . Let your _____ so
_____ before men, that they may see your good _____
and _____ your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14a, 16 NKJV)

DAY 4

Confrontation **2 SAMUEL 21:15-17**

Please Read 2 Samuel 21:15-17 and answer the following questions.

[1] What happened to David in verses 15-16?

Note: 300 shekels weight is the equivalent of about 7.5 pounds, as the NLT puts it.¹¹

[2] Who intervened, and what did David's men beg of him (verse 17)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] How must we, like David, be on guard against the enemy in all seasons of our lives (1 Peter 5:5-9)?

[2] Like David, we too have been called to be a light to the world around us. How do the following passages address this?

Matthew 5:13-16

Acts 26:18

Ephesians 5:8

Daily Life Point: There is no such word as *retirement* in the vocabulary of the Christian life, which David learned the hard way. Roles will change, yes, but we still must do all we can to maintain integrity and be a light to the world around us.

How will you seek to make this a reality in your own life? As you think about this, meditate on the words of David's son, Solomon: "The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them" (Proverbs 11:3 NKJV).

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

You are the _____ of the world... Let your _____ so
_____ before men, that they may _____ your good
_____ and _____ your _____ in heaven.

(Matthew 5:14a, 16 NKJV)

DAY 5

Opposition
2 SAMUEL 21:18-22

Please Read 2 Samuel 21:18-22 and answer the following questions.

[1] Some final battles with these Philistine giants (Raphaim) continued. They appear to have been related to the Goliath that David killed, and indeed it is probably the brother of Goliath that is mentioned here in verse 19. What were some of the strange characteristics of these enemies (verses 19-20)?

[2] We mustn't think of these giants in the terms like "Jack and the Bean Stalk!" The Philistines were located in a relatively small area along the western coast of Palestine. They inbred, producing genetic anomalies, which included increased size and odd characteristics.¹² They may have had a condition called "gigantism," which is marked by tall stature, large body size, enlarged head, exaggerated growth of hands and feet with thick fingers or toes, coarse facial features, and many health problems. Robert Waldon, whom Ripley's Believe It or Not made famous, measured 8 feet 11 inches at his death!¹³

Despite the Philistine's frightening appearance to the Israelites, what was the result for all of them (verse 22)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] Interestingly, the place called Gob was 22 miles west of Jerusalem.¹⁴ Gob means "a pit."¹⁵ The giants always try to drag us down to a pit where we are stuck in conflict with them over and over again, but God has more for us other than life in the pits.

What kind of life does God bring us despite the enemy's opposition (John 10:10)? How can we be confident that He will lead us to victory (1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 2:14)?

[2] David's men worked together against these foes, just as Christians must work together against those giants that seek to bring us down. We weren't called to be spiritual "Lone Rangers;" we need to band together and stand strong against the enemy of our souls.

How did Paul describe the victorious results of working together in unity (Philippians 1:27–28; 2:1–4)?

Daily Life Point: David was past the point of fighting these enemies face to face, but he certainly trained his men how to deal with the enemies they would face.

The influence an experienced person can have on a younger person in the faith is invaluable. Think about how you can do the same for others as you ponder what Warren Wiersbe said:

When as a youth David killed Goliath, he certainly gave the men of Israel a good example of what it means to trust God for victory. It's good to know how to kill giants yourself, but be sure to help others kill the giants in their lives.¹⁶

MEMORY PASSAGE

Write out this week's passage by memory. Then review the passage throughout the week.

Matthew 5:14a, 16 NKJV:

DAY 6

Pursuing God's Heart

[1] Despite the unusual nature of this week's chapter, we have seen that there are several truths we must glean for ourselves in order to be a person after God's own heart. There are times of conflict we will all face in life, and it is always unpleasant, but responding to the conflicts of life in a godly way will lead to growth and renewed strength for future conflicts we will face. Specifically, record here anything you have learned that you need to put into practice in your own life:

Guilt:

Restitution:

Restoration / Reconciliation:

Direct Confrontation:

Direct Opposition:

[2] How have you progressed in dealing with the giants of your life? What have you learned this week about facing them when their sons or relatives come back and try to get you back into the pits? Please share some thoughts and pray for each other anew in dealing with the giants of your lives.

[3] We also read of how important it is to be an example to others, and how our steps of faith can stimulate others to take steps of action. We'll always be an example of Christ to others, for good or bad. Will you choose to be a light to your world or try to hide that light under a basket and walk in darkness? What are some specific ways you might be able to help a fellow believer walk in the light when darkness is trying to creep in around them?

[4] Finally, please record and share any other thoughts you have or things that have spoken to you in your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Matthew 14a, 16 NKJV

From memory, write out this week's passage below. Then review the passage throughout the day. Be prepared to share the verse with your group.

PARTING THOUGHTS

Many opinions have been rendered as to the occasion of Psalm 124, one of the Psalms of Ascents, but it does indeed title itself "a Psalm of David," and in fact, it may have indeed been sung in view of what would have happened if Israel had not been victorious over the Philistines, how serious this really was.¹⁷ Yet what assurance the closing of this psalm brings to us, that we have true help in the Lord, the God of all creation! Let's close out our week by meditating on this psalm, and thanking the Lord for the fact that He has been "on our side" through all we have faced or ever will!

Psalm 124
A Song of Ascents. Of David.

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,"
Let Israel now say-
"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
When men rose up against us,
Then they would have swallowed us alive,
When their wrath was kindled against us;
Then the waters would have overwhelmed us,
The stream would have gone over our soul;
Then the swollen waters
Would have gone over our soul."

Blessed be the Lord,
Who has not given us as prey to their teeth.
Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers;
The snare is broken, and we have escaped.
Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

NOTES

- 1 Joe O. Lewis, *Layman's Bible Book Commentary*, vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), p. 117.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1994), p. 2326–2327.
- 4 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Restored* (Colorado Springs: Victor Books, 2002), p. 131.
- 5 John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997), p. 459.
- 6 *The New Scofield Study Bible*, NKJV (Nashville: Nelson, 1989), p. 394.
- 7 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 459.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ivor Powell, *David, His Life and Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1990), p. 325.
- 10 Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*. The New American Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), p. 446.
- 11 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 460.
- 12 Mary J. Evans, *1 and 2 Samuel*. New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), p. 233.
- 13 "Gigantism and Acromegaly," March 2002, <<http://www.emedicine.com>>.
- 14 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 460.
- 15 "Biblical Cyclopedic Index" in *The Open Bible*, NKJV (Nashville: Nelson, 1985), p. 145.
- 16 Wiersbe, *Be Restored*, p. 135.
- 17 James M. Boice, *Psalms*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), p. 1097.

