

In Lesson 19, we examined David's last prophetic words. This was not his final statement, but a legacy left to Israel that teaches about spiritual leadership, being a godly example, and having confidence in the promises of God. We also read the records of David's valiant and victorious men, as well as David's roll of honor, ironically ending with Uriah the Hittite.

Through considering these examples, we learned that anyone can become valiant for Christ through His Spirit and by trusting in His Word for victorious living. We don't have to be a super human or a super saint to have an impact for God. All we need to do is yield ourselves and trust in Him, and let Him use us for His best plans and His glory.

This week we conclude our studies in 1 and 2 Samuel, but we'll still examine the final days of David's life in Lessons 21–22. The events of these final three lessons cover the last ten years of David's life from the time of Absalom and Sheba's attempted rebellions to his death.<sup>1</sup> This chapter sadly records one final major mistake of David but shows how God turned that mistake and sin into good. The parallel to this chapter is found in 1 Chronicles 21. You may wish to read that chapter as well.

## DAY 1

### Confusion 2 SAMUEL 24:1–5

Please read 2 Samuel 24:1–5 and answer the following questions.

[ 1 ] What unusual thing happened in verse 1? How did the author of Chronicles record this (1 Chronicles 21:1)?

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[ 2 ] What did David command of Joab and the other military leaders, and how did Joab react to this strange request (verses 2–4)?

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[ 3 ] They then began numbering the people by crossing the Jordan and starting there. Interestingly, what does 1 Chronicles 21:6 add about this?

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## **EXPANDED QUESTIONS**

[ 1 ] There is no contradiction between the account here and in 1 Chronicles. God's anger was aroused against Israel for some reason, and He allowed Satan to tempt David into this sinful action.

It was wrong for them to number the people except under very specific circumstances (Exodus 30:11–16; Numbers 3; 26). From the context of David commanding the military to do this, he was either trying to take pride in his military might or wrongly planning some military actions. He was therefore shifting his trust from God to human power, which was something he had written against in many of his psalms.<sup>2</sup>

So Satan went to work on David, and this is one of four places in the Old Testament we see him specifically at work (the others are in Genesis 3; Job 1–2; and Zechariah 3).<sup>3</sup>

What is important to remember when temptations come our way (James 1:12–15)? What is also true when God allows us to be tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13)?

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[ 2 ] 1 Chronicles 21:6 tells us that Joab found this order of David to be "abominable," which means he loathed, abhorred, and detested it.<sup>4</sup> In the past at important times, Joab stood up and redirected David, such as over Absalom. Why he didn't do so here is unclear.

What is vital for us to do out of love when we see a fellow believer taking such a sinful or destructive course of action (Galatians 6:1–2)?

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**Daily Life Point:** "When a man becomes great in his own estimation, his future is threatened."<sup>5</sup> David's pride got the best of him at this point, and it led to this horrible catastrophe. There were two problems that Charles Swindoll noticed in David at this point that may have led to this: David was out of touch with God, for there is no record of him praying or seeking the Lord about this; secondly, he was unaccountable to anyone else around him, a very dangerous position.<sup>6</sup>

How can you personally avoid these two mistakes and avoid being in a place where you can allow sin to easily creep into your life? Share some thoughts here with your group.

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## **MEMORY PASSAGE**

This week we will memorize 2 Samuel 24:24a. Review the passage several times throughout each day. By the end of the week, you should have it memorized.

**Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24a NKJV).**

## **DAY 2**

### Conviction **2 SAMUEL 24:6-10**

*Please Read 2 Samuel 24:6-10 and answer the following questions.*

[ 1 ] Joab and his men traveled throughout the length of the land, from Dan (about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee) to Beersheba (about 45 miles southwest of Jerusalem).<sup>7</sup>

How long did this task take them (verse 8)?

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[ 2 ] What was the count of men that they gave to David (verse 9)?

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*Note:* 1 Chronicles records the count as 1.1 million in Israel and 400,000 in Judah. Why the differences? In part, it may be due to listing only the "valiant men" of Israel. In other words, those who were battle seasoned soldiers, and the less amount of Judah mentioned there because of the omissions Joab purposely made in his count.<sup>8</sup> There is also a possibility of a copying error, but whatever the ultimate reason for the differences, we can rest assured that God gave us a reliable, trustworthy, and error free account in the original Bible documents.<sup>9</sup>

[ 3 ] At this point, suddenly the conviction of the Holy Spirit fell upon David and his heart condemned and smote him. What did he have to admit to the Lord in view of his actions (verse 10)?

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## **EXPANDED QUESTIONS**

[ 1 ] The Holy Spirit acts as our guide in the paths of our lives. He influences our hearts, not the literal organ, but the seat of our innermost being and moral decisions we must make.<sup>10</sup> When we stray from the path of righteousness, He brings conviction that we have been in the wrong. David here was overwhelmed with grief, like his heart was being wounded and rent apart,<sup>11</sup> and he realized he had greatly sinned against the Lord.

We must be careful, though, to realize the difference between condemnation and the sense of guilt and separa-

tion from God that the Holy Spirit brings. The condemnation that Satan brings tries to keep us further apart from God.

What light does John 16:8 and Romans 8:1–4 shed on this?

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[ 2 ] Even those seeking after God's own heart will still fail, and we need the conviction of the Spirit to help us realize our need to get back on the path of righteousness. The person seeking after God will get up and respond to conviction. That person will make things right and press on again, not being crushed by sin and the condemnation of the devil.

Compare the attitude of David at an earlier time of his life, as recorded in 1 Samuel 24:2–7. What did he do to avoid further sinful actions on the part of him and his men?

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**Daily Life Point:** David admitted that his sin was wrong and that it was foolish. However, he sought to get right with the Lord rather than succumbing to condemnation. Saul, in just the opposite way, realized, "Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly" (1 Samuel 26:21), but he did nothing to change his ways and died in sin undealt with. The wise man, not the fool, will get up when he falls, seek God's cleansing and renewal, and go on freed from condemnation.

How can you follow this example in times where you stumble and fail, not letting the heavy and needless weight of condemnation tie you down?

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***MEMORY PASSAGE***

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

**Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a \_\_\_\_\_; nor will I \_\_\_\_\_ burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which \_\_\_\_\_ me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24a NKJV)**

**DAY 3**

Choices

**2 SAMUEL 24:11-15**

Please Read 2 Samuel 24:11-15 and answer the following questions.

[ 1 ] The prophet Gad was directed to go to David with God's response. What unique choices did He set before David in consequence to this sin (verses 12-13)?

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*Note:* Along with 1 Chronicles 21:12, many manuscripts state three years of famine, not seven.<sup>12</sup> This makes sense because the others are three-fold.

[ 2 ] What was David's reaction to these difficult choices (verse 14)?

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[ 3 ] What was the extent of the toll of this plague that God sent upon Israel (verse 15)?

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**EXPANDED QUESTIONS**

[ 1 ] What a horrible choice David had to make in view of the consequences of his sin, and whatever further iniquity the Lord saw in Israel! David found himself in great distress, a narrow tight place of anguish, trouble, and affliction, over this decision.<sup>13</sup> But he made the right choice of falling into the hands of the Lord, because of His great and undeserved mercies.

The best choice he could have made was to stop this whole thing in its tracks before it led to further disaster, prior to sinning, but of course it was too late for that now. Yet God is merciful, even in His discipline of His children.

What does Hebrews 12:5-11 remind us about the times that we must face His discipline in our lives?

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[ 2 ] "The fact that the Lord oversees the entire judgment process is ultimately a comfort to humanity. It means no malevolent action can come that is not subject to God's oversight and divinely imposed limitations."<sup>14</sup>

What are some things the following passages teach us about God's underserved mercy toward us, even in times like David faced?

Exodus 34:6-7

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Psalm 86:5, 15

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Psalm 103:8-14

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Isaiah 55:7; Micah 7:18

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**Daily Life Point:** David faced some tough choices, but maybe he first should have made the right choice to not give into his pride and bring on this disaster. Warren Wiersbe well observed that God "gave David nine months to change his mind, just long enough for the 'pregnancy of sin' to give birth to death."<sup>15</sup> Some choices to sin are against ourselves, but often times we make foolish choices that affect others. In David's case, his sin led to the deaths of 70,000 people.<sup>16</sup>

What are some steps that you can take to insure that you are making right, godly choices? How can you avoid making the choice to sin when its temptation and opportunity comes? You never know what the toll of that ungodly choice will be.

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### ***MEMORY PASSAGE***

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

Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely \_\_\_\_\_ it from you  
for a \_\_\_\_\_; nor will I \_\_\_\_\_ burnt offerings to the  
Lord my God with that which \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_."

(2 Samuel 24:24a NKJV)

**DAY 4**

Confession  
**2 SAMUEL 24:16-20**

Please Read 2 Samuel 24:16-20 and answer the following questions.

[ 1 ] What great act of mercy did the Lord extend to David and the people (verse 16)?

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[ 2 ] What did David do in view of God's great act (verse 17)?

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[ 3 ] Now that David fully took responsibility for his actions, God gave the solution to avert this plague. What was the first step in the plan (verses 18-19)?

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**EXPANDED QUESTIONS**

[ 1 ] God wants us to confess our sin and take the full responsibility for it. He does not want us to soften our sin or blame others for it. The word the New Testament uses for *confession* literally means "to have like thoughts or like speech, to speak agreeably, confess and profess something."<sup>17</sup> Once we confess our sins, it restores our close walk with the Lord. Then God can lead us to take the practical steps of repentance.

What are some things that you learn about confession from these passages?

Leviticus 26:40-42

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2 Chronicles 7:14

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Proverbs 28:13

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1 John 1:9

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[ 2 ] David still had the heart of a shepherd, seeing that these people, his sheep, were suffering. How was this like the heart of Jesus toward the people of Israel in His day (Mark 6:34)? How should any leader have such a shepherd's heart over those they lead (1 Peter 5:2-4)?

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**Daily Life Point:** Conviction should lead to confession of our sin. That confession should lead to specific actions of repentance. When we confess these sins and are made right with God anew, it should strengthen us against the same things in the future. Unconfessed sin produces a hardened heart and a disconnected relationship with God, as Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

If there is anything between you and the Lord that is not dealt with and is damaging your walk, today is the day to deal with it. He wants you to have an abundant and Spirit-filled life. He does not want you to have a useless life marred by guilt. Take steps to get right today.

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### **MEMORY PASSAGE**

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

Then the \_\_\_\_\_ said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely  
\_\_\_\_\_ it from you for a \_\_\_\_\_; nor will I  
\_\_\_\_\_ burnt \_\_\_\_\_ to the  
\_\_\_\_\_ my God with that which \_\_\_\_\_ me  
\_\_\_\_\_." (2 Samuel 24:24a NKJV)

### **DAY 5**

Conclusion  
**2 SAMUEL 24:21-25**

Please read 2 Samuel 24:21-25 and answer the following questions.

[ 1 ] Araunah (1 Chronicles 21 calls him Ornan) was understandably concerned when he saw David and his servants coming his way. What did David tell him the reason for this was? How did Araunah graciously respond to this (verses 21-23)?

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[ 2 ] What was David's classic response to his generous offer, and for how much did he buy the threshing floor and oxen (verse 24)?

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[ 3 ] What happened next, and how did God respond (verse 25)? Additionally, what significant information is added in the account in 1 Chronicles 21:25–22:1?

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*Note:* David paid 50 shekels of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen; in 1 Chronicles 21 he paid 600 shekels of gold "for the place," meaning the whole area there on Mt. Moriah.<sup>18</sup> As of 1985, the Jewish weight of a shekel of silver was worth about the equivalent of \$128, and a shekel of gold about \$1,920,<sup>19</sup> so David would have paid \$6,400 for the threshing floor and oxen and \$1,152,000 for the area on Mt. Moriah—no small piece of change, especially in Old Testament days!

### ***EXPANDED QUESTIONS***

[ 1 ] The sacrifices God desires are not really those that are external or ritualistic. He looks for the sacrifice of a broken heart—one tender toward Him and of humble intercession. It was not the mere action of David's offering that averted the plague, it was his actions by faith that God would respond out of His grace and faithfulness. At one point, God told Israel that He was sick of their empty acts and multiplied external sacrifices that meant nothing much to them, let alone Him! What "sacrifices" does He desire instead?

Isaiah 1:16–18

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Micah 6:6–8

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Romans 12:1–2

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Hebrews 13:15–16

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[ 2 ] God did an awesome thing in this passage: He took a horrible situation and turned it into the foundation that David desired all his adult life, and that was to establish a temple to the Lord on Mt. Moriah. From Abraham, who was directed to offer his son to God, to David averting this plague by this sacrifice, to Jesus Himself being crucified there, Mt. Moriah has always been a place where a price was paid, and a sacrifice that cost something great was offered.<sup>20</sup> This is a very fitting end to our studies in 1, 2 Samuel, because David's actions here link him with the past and with the glory of Israel and its future in the coming Messiah, Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

This turn of events, a strange outgrowth of the providential work of God in the midst of what seemed to be a horrible disaster, should encourage us to trust Him all the more with our troubles and problems.

How do Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28–30 remind us of God's ability to transform all situations into something good and for His glory?

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**Daily Life Point:** David refused to offer something to the Lord that cost him nothing. Yet we can be tempted to try and get by with giving God our second best and not fully seek after His heart.

How will you personally be different and seek to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24)? Read the following statement by Ivor Powell, and answer his question in view of how you will respond to this: "Eternal love is sacrificial love. Is it not a cause for amazement that some who profess His name can offer to their Lord something which costs nothing?"<sup>22</sup>

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## ***MEMORY PASSAGE***

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

**2 Samuel 24:24a NKJV**

**DAY 6**

Pursuing God's Heart

[ 1 ] David's continued failures remind us of how important it is to always be on guard against those things that can bring great devastation and disgrace to the name of the Lord. As Charles Swindoll well observed, "If a man as great and godly as David could foul up his life so near the end of his days, so can anyone else. That includes you. That includes me."<sup>23</sup> In what areas of your life do you need to keep better guard and track of, so you too can prevent such a disaster at any stage of your life?

What are some of the things that personally spoke to your heart this week?

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[ 2 ] Sacrifice has always been an essential part of worshipping and serving the Lord. God wants our true sacrifices to be from the heart. He does not desire acts of duty or trying to earn His favor apart from having the right motive. That's being a Pharisee, and Jesus well pointed out that even their extreme actions of piety fell short (Matthew 5:20).

How can you become more like David in sacrificing the things that really cost something? Or, how can you be like the sacrificial believers in Macedonia, as Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 8:1–5:

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. (NKJV)

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[ 3 ] God has a way of redeeming and using even the worst situations, bringing glory to Himself. Many have suffered from what seems like horrific tragedy, but God has been able to use them in unique ways and draw many others into His kingdom despite the situations. The confidence we have in God is not that we will have every "why" and "how" answered. The confidence is that everything works together for good when we are in Christ. This truth helps to conform us into God's image (Romans 8:28).

Ecclesiastes says, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven . . . He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end" (3:1, 11).

How have you learned to entrust God with those things that are most difficult and unclear in your life? How have you gained the ability to face each new day with confidence rather than with dread and uncertainty? Please share some thoughts here and pray through this with your group.

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[ 4 ] Lastly, please record and share any other important things that the Lord has shown you over this last week that may minister to the others in your group.

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## ***MEMORY PASSAGE***

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.

**2 Samuel 24:24a NKJV:**

## ***PARTING THOUGHTS***

It is quite possible that after these renewed experiences with the mercy of God that David wrote a fascinating psalm—Psalm 136.<sup>24</sup> While we aren't sure David wrote this, we do know it speaks of trust in God's ability to take care of all things in our lives out of His great mercies. The Jews have called this psalm, "The Great Hallel," because of its giving thanks to the Lord for His love that endured forever; the idea of "give thanks" also contains the idea of confessing and acknowledging Him, confessing our faith in Him in worship.<sup>25</sup> C. H. Spurgeon well said of this psalm, "Most hymns with a solid, simple chorus become favourites with congregations, and this is sure to have been one of the best loved. It contains nothing but praise. It is tuned to rapture, and can only be fully enjoyed by a devoutly grateful heart."<sup>26</sup>

### Psalm 136

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!  
For His mercy endures forever.  
Oh, give thanks to the God of gods!  
For His mercy endures forever.  
Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!  
For His mercy endures forever:  
To Him who alone does great wonders,  
For His mercy endures forever;

To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
To Him who made great lights,  
For His mercy endures forever—  
The sun to rule by day,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
The moon and stars to rule by night,  
For His mercy endures forever.

To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
And brought out Israel from among them,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
To Him who divided the Red Sea in two,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
And made Israel pass through the midst of it,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
To Him who led His people through the wilderness,  
For His mercy forever;  
To Him who struck down great kings,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
And slew famous kings,  
For His mercy endures forever—  
Sihon king of the Amorites,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
And Og king of Bashan,  
For His mercy endures forever—  
And gave their land as a heritage,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
A heritage to Israel His servant,  
For His mercy endures forever.

Who remembered us in our lowly state,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
And rescued us from our enemies,  
For His mercy endures forever;  
Who gives food to all flesh,  
For His mercy endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven!  
For His mercy endures forever.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> F. B. Meyer, *The Life of David* (Lynwood, Wash.: Emerald Books, 1995), p. 177.
- <sup>2</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible*, ed. John MacArthur (Nashville: Word Bibles, 1997), p. 464.
- <sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Restored* (Colorado Springs: Victor Books, 2002), p. 156.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1994), p. 2382.
- <sup>5</sup> Ivor Powell, *David, His Life and Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1990), p. 340.
- <sup>6</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *David, a Man of Passion and Destiny* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 275.
- <sup>7</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 464.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> *The New Scofield Study Bible*, New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), p. 486.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, p. 2328.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2340.
- <sup>12</sup> *The New Scofield Study Bible*, p. 399.
- <sup>13</sup> James Strong, "A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible with Their Renderings in the Authorized English Version," in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1890 Reprint), p. 101.
- <sup>14</sup> Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), p. 475.
- <sup>15</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), p. 418.
- <sup>16</sup> Alan Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1962), p. 242.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1991), p. 941
- <sup>18</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 466.
- <sup>19</sup> *The Open Bible*, New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), p. 28.
- <sup>20</sup> Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God*, p. 244.
- <sup>21</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, p. 474.
- <sup>22</sup> Powell, *David*, p. 347.
- <sup>23</sup> Swindoll, *David*, p. 282.
- <sup>24</sup> Powell, *David*, p. 344.
- <sup>25</sup> James M. Boice, *Psalms*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), p. 1180.
- <sup>26</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. 2 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Undated Reprint), p. 204.



