

**BIG WORD: 1 Samuel**  
Homework for Chapters 27—31  
Discussion Dates: 23 May 2012 (in house)  
and 24 May 2012 (online)

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**DAY ONE: Overview**

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 1 Samuel 28—31.

If possible, read all five chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

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**DAY TWO: Repentance and Reconciliation?**

Last time we read through chapter 27, but, aside from counting a few repeated patterns, we didn't discuss it. Let's do that now.

READ 1 Samuel 26:21—27:12.

Saul cannot be trusted. It doesn't matter how many times he confesses his sins and declares allegiance to God and David, his ways never seem to change. At the end of chapter 26, Saul and David had another intense encounter, at the end of which, Saul blessed David and even called him "son." Yet David did not return to him. Rather, as described at the beginning of chapter 27, David basically takes a suicide path. He's convinced Saul will never stop pursuing him and that he will be safer with the Philistines. Remember, them? Yup. It's that bad.

To repent means to change directions. It typically involves confession, but, more importantly, it evidences a distinct about face. Someone acknowledges their incorrect thinking or behavior and changes to make it right.

Saul confessed, but he didn't repent. David ascertained the distinction. He knew that without repentance true reconciliation is impossible.

How do you know when someone truly repents?

What should you do when they don't?

What if you are the one who needs to repent. How can you foster staying power in your about face?

Is there a link between repentance and forgiveness? Describe that relationship. Can you have one without the other?

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### **DAY THREE: Ex-pat Alliances**

When David sought refuge in the land of the Philistines, he had over 600 men with him, plus all their families. He was not timid, however, and went straight to Achish, the king of Gath, who gave him the land surrounding Ziglag.

Ziglag was originally allotted to Judah (Joshua 15:31) then transferred to Simeon (Joshua 15:9). At some point it must have been conquered by the Philistines, though we don't know exactly when. It was deep enough into Philistine territory that Saul didn't pursue David further, but also far enough from Gath that David could do what he wanted without falling under too much suspicion.

What did David and his men do while living in Ziglag?

What people groups did they conquer?

What people groups did David tell King Achish they had conquered?

What was Achish's opinion of David?

By the time chapter 28 begins, David had gained the approval of King Achish, enough that Achish asked David to go into battle with him against the armies of Saul. David appears to have become a traitor against Israel.

READ 1 Samuel 29.

Achish clearly trusted David as his own servant, but the rest of the Philistines didn't share his opinion. What were their thoughts?

David defended his right to fight with the Philistines against the Israelites. What do you think about this? Why would he do that?

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#### **DAY FOUR: The Spiritist of Endor**

READ 1 Samuel 28:4—25.

What was Saul's first response when he saw the Philistine armies?

Whom did he seek for wisdom and guidance?

Now back up and read verse 3. Why do you think Saul banished all the wizards and necromancers? Why did he wait until Samuel died to do it?

His efforts were not thorough. I don't know how much time passed between Samuel's death and Saul's request to find a spiritist, but Endor was only about ten miles from Mount Gilboa. It was still in Israelite territory.

Once found, the woman is clearly suspicious of Saul, now disguised. Rightfully, she should be, but Saul makes an oath in the name of the LORD that she will not be punished. This persuades her. What do you make of this? Why would someone whose very profession is against the Laws of God find comfort in a promise made in His name?

Saul had been out of favor with God for quite some time. Being so, did he have any right to make the oath? Why or why not?

Distinct differences exist between different types of spiritists. Wizards and witches usually employ potions and spells. Psychics and astrologers read signs in their environments and in nature in and around their clients. Necromancers call up and speak to the dead.

Whom did King Saul ask this woman to bring up?

Describe what happened next.

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### **DAY FIVE: Trouble at Home**

While David and his men followed Achish toward the Philistine battlefields, the Amalekites attacked Ziglaga. (You will remember the Amalekites were among the people groups David and his men raided in chapter 27.) Upon finding their families taken and their homes burned, David's men turned against him. There was even talk of stoning.

What was David's response?

David received guidance from two sources. What were they?

- 1.
- 2.

When they found their enemies, David and his men (now dwindled to 400) fought from twilight of one day to evening of the next! Remember they'd been travelling for days, likely with little food or rest.

How many of their enemy escaped?

How many of David's men died?

They returned with their wives, their children and all the spoil, but there was dissention in the ranks. Many believed that only those who fought should be rewarded with plunder.

How did David answer this dispute?

READ 1 Samuel 30:26—31.

To whom did David send a portion of their spoils?

Why is this important?

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## **DAY SIX: The Death of Saul**

Chapter 31 gives the account of Saul's death, as well as the deaths of three of his four sons. (*Isbosheth is missing from this account.*)

Jonathan was among those who died in battle. His dream of being coregent with David (1 Samuel 23:17) never came to be.

At the beginning of our study Eli died because of the sins of his sons (and his steadfast allegiance to them). Here, at the end of the book, Jonathan dies because of the sins of his father (and his steadfast allegiance to him). The

situations are different, to be sure, but there is a reflection nonetheless. Sin has widespread arms, and innocents are often lost at its hands.

Even unto death, Saul makes his decisions based on fear. What fear motivates him to suicide?

Pride and fear can often co-exist, even feed one another, as evidenced in the life of Saul. What fears might you have that are rooted in pride?

How can you actively weed out those things?

READ 1 Chronicles 10. This slightly different account of Saul's death offers an additional commentary at the end. According to this passage, why did Saul die?

What were Saul's most notorious transgressions?

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### **DAY SEVEN: In His Own Words**

READ the following Psalms written by David around the time we just studied.

- Psalm 17
- Psalm 18
- Psalm 63
- Psalm 121
- Psalm 123
- Psalm 130

What phrases or themes are consistent in these writings?

What attributes of David's character can we imitate? How?