

BIG WORD: 1 Samuel

Homework for Chapters 21--27
Discussion Dates: 9 May 2012 (in house)
and 10 May 2012 (online)

DAY ONE and TWO: 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 what He wants for you in this reading.

Since we're covering such a large passage this time, we're going to do things a little differently. Instead of just reading for an overview, I'd like you to practice the inductive study method used by Precept Ministries. As you read through these seven chapters – 1 Samuel 21—27 – you'll notice a consistent pattern, a cycle of behavior. Below are some questions to help you identify these. It may be helpful to employ a highlighter or colored pencils while you read.

Do you see any repeated phrases? List them and their references here.

Now take note of the numbers.

How many times did Saul try to kill David?

How many times did David have opportunity to kill Saul?

How many times did David try to kill Saul?

How many times did David confront Saul?

How many times did Saul confess his sins and promise to change his ways?

How many oaths or promises are made?

How many times is Saul described as God's chosen?

How many times is it said that God is with David? That David will rule Israel?

How many men were with David at the beginning of this passage (21:1)?

How many men were with David at the end of this passage (27:2)?

Are there any other numbers or repeated occurrences that stand out to you?

DAY THREE: Doeg

Chapters 21 and 22 of 1 Samuel describe an interesting series of events. First we have David seemingly lying to a priest in order to gain food and flee the king. Meanwhile a sniveling fellow hides in the shadows until his chance arises for fame in defense of the unrighteous king's honor. The situation escalates to a standoff between the servants of God and the servants of Saul, David claiming responsibility for the bloodbath that ensues.

I kind of picture Doeg as this round, contemptible creature, more interested in filling his pockets than protecting the innocent. He reminds me of Haman from the story of Esther: arrogant, small, a conscience-less opportunist.

Commentators agree that he was a herdsman of Saul. His name means "fearful." He was an Edomite, which is to say a descendent of Esau, the brother of Jacob, and therefore not a true Israelite.

Doeg doesn't immediately tell anyone about his sighting of David. What prompts his tongue to loosen?

Of what does Saul accuse the priests?

When they respond that they've done nothing wrong, Saul commands their deaths. His initial command is met with resistance. This is not the first time Saul's servants have refused to obey him. (Remember his death sentence on Jonathan?) What do you think caused them to rebel against the king this time?

Doeg does not possess the same mindset. Why do you think this is?

Against whom is Saul really fighting?

DAY FOUR: A Double-Minded Man

James 1:8 asserts that double-minded men are “unstable in all [their] ways.” This is certainly true of King Saul. He initially doesn't want to be king, but then fights God and all others who threaten to take the throne from him. He is passionate about God's pursuits, but also defiles God's laws openly. He loves David; he hates David. The only thing truly predictable about Saul is his inconsistency. He cannot be trusted.

Have you ever known (or been) a double-minded person? What do you think causes this attitude?

How does this attitude and its resulting behavior affect those around the double-minded person?

How does it impact the success of the double-minded person? (*See Luke 11:17 and Matthew 12:25.*)

Once one identifies a split or divided mind, how can one get back to a single focus?

List ways to prevent becoming double-minded.

DAY FIVE: In His Own Words

READ these Psalms and take note of David's mindset. Note any repeated sentiments.

- Psalm 34 – written when he faced Ahimelech in 1 Samuel 21
- Psalm 52 – written when he faced Doeg in 1 Samuel 21
- Psalm 142 – written while in the cave in 1 Samuel 22
- Psalm 54

- Psalm 7
- Psalm 31
- Psalm 27
- Psalm 141

Where does David consistently seek help?

Where does he find refuge?

What does he wish upon his enemies?

DAY SIX: Abigail

Abigail's name means "my father is joy." Nabal's name means "foolish." By the account in chapter 25, what other contrasts can you see between this husband and wife?

Why did David become so angry so quickly? What right did he have to Nabal's food and provisions?

David's response is not exactly godly. Based on Luke 6:27—31, his angry intent actually contradicts Christ's teachings and God's design. How do you typically respond when you feel you've been wronged or that something is owed you?

Abigail swiftly diffused the situation. How did she do this? What effective tactics did she employ?

David wanted vengeance, but Abigail wisely protected him from guilt. In the end, God provided justice without the assistance of David, Abigail or any of Nabal's disgruntled servants.

Sometimes it can be difficult to wait on God's timing. Think of a situation in which you took matters into your own hands. How did it turn out?

Now think of a time when you waited on God. Was the result different or the same? How?

DAY SEVEN: Nurturing a Righteous Heart

In 1 Samuel 24:13 David quotes an old proverb: "From evil people evil proceeds." While this is not a biblical proverb, just a common saying of the day, it holds truth. What is in one's heart dictates their honest behavior. Character is revealed by conduct. We know through experience that this is true, but we also see it backed up by Scripture.

READ James 3:9—12
 Matthew 7:16—20
 Mark 7:14-15, 21—23
 Proverbs 4:23
 Psalm 119:9—16

How can we guard our hearts and nurture righteousness?

David wrote Psalms to seek God, to protect his heart and to align himself with God's statutes. What creative expression can you employ to pursue God and foster righteousness?