

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY TWELVE

New King, New Throne, Same Lord

Selected Scriptures

I warn you, as you vicariously enter into the life of David, to be careful because with power comes those unique kinds of temptations that very few can handle. The hand of God was great with David. But he was still a man. And he could still be given to failure. And indeed he did.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

An old woodsman proverb says, “A tree is best measured when it’s down.” When a tree is standing, even the best lumberjack will struggle to determine the tree’s height, to evaluate the wood’s quality, and to appraise the timber’s value. Likewise, a person’s character is best measured after his or her death through mature evaluation and reflection.

Though David died long ago, his life proves very instructive for those traveling on faith’s journey. Early on, David rooted his life in God and grew to be a hero whom all Israel looked up to. Yet he didn’t stand forever. When the winds of temptation and selfish desire grew too strong for David to withstand, he gradually gave in to sin, causing him to splinter and finally crack.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at David during the height of his success as well as at the beginning of his fall to uncover *why* he ultimately fell and *how* the people of God today can avoid making the same mistakes.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

To prepare your heart to plunge into the depths of God's Word, pray the words of *Psalm 63:1–4*.

O God, you are my God;
I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you;
my whole body longs for you
in this parched and weary land
where there is no water.
I have seen you in your sanctuary
and gazed upon your power and glory.
Your unfailing love is better than life itself;
how I praise you!
I will praise you as long as I live,
lifting up my hands to you in prayer.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The drama of David's life unfolded in two acts. The first act, preserved in the book of 1 Samuel, tells of David's rise from a modest shepherd to a national hero, then from a wanted fugitive to Israel's new king.

At the beginning of 2 Samuel, David's life had reached its pinnacle. Yet not much time passed before David became entangled in his own sinful desires. His success turned to failure as he slid down a spiritual decline, which persisted until he died.

Before you turn to the first chapters of 2 Samuel, review Pastor Chuck Swindoll's chart on the entire book below.



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SECOND SAMUEL

	David's Triumphs		David's Troubles			Appendix
	Reigning in Hebron over Judea	Reigning in Jerusalem over all Israel	With himself	With his family	With his nation	Miscellaneous narratives
	David's lament (1) David's crowning (2) David's increase (3-4)	A new capital (5) A new worship center (6) A new dynasty (7) A new boundary (8) A new son (9) Another new boundary (10)	David's sin (11) Nathan's denunciation (12)	Amnon's immorality (13) Absalom's crime and flight (14) Absalom's revolt (15) Absalom's counselors (16-17) Absalom's death (18)	David's return (19) Sheba's revolt (20)	A famine (21) A song (22) A prophecy (23) A failure (24)
	CHAPTERS 1-4	CHAPTERS 5-10	CHAPTERS 11-12	CHAPTERS 13-18	CHAPTERS 19-20	CHAPTERS 21-24
Theme	Blessings or consequences follow every action.					
Key Verses	7:12-13					
Christ in 2 Samuel	Foreshadowed in David's reign, which, though imperfect, is characterized by justice, wisdom, and integrity; the Messiah, the Son of David, is promised as an offspring of the Davidic line and One who will sit upon David's throne forever.					

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Observation: The Beginning of David's Decline

If you have time, carefully read all of *2 Samuel 1-5*, and keep track of one or two key observations from each chapter.¹ Otherwise, you can use the questions below like stepping stones to hop your way through these chapters.

What news did David receive in *1:4-6*?

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With Saul and his sons dead, the people of Israel were uncertain about who would be the successor to the king. This created some controversy regarding who had the right to the throne. Many, especially those living in the northern regions of Israel, wanted Saul's son Ishbosheth to be king. Others, living in the southern regions of Judah, followed David instead (*2 Samuel 2:8–11; 3:1*).

According to *2:1*, where did David go after hearing news about Saul? Did he settle down in the south or move up to the north where Saul had previously lived? Using your Bible *atlas*, look at the geography of Israel in the early years of the kingdom to map out these key locations.

While the conflict between David and Ishbosheth escalated, David's house grew along with his influence. What were the names of the children born to David's respective wives? Read *3:2–5*, and fill in the spaces below.

Ahinoam from Jezreel (*3:2*): _____

Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel (*3:3*): _____

Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur (*3:3*): _____

Haggith (*3:4*): _____

Abital (*3:4*): _____

Eglah (*3:5*): _____



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After seven-and-a-half years of conflict, two of Ishbosheth's *own men* murdered him while he was taking an afternoon nap (2 *Samuel* 4:5–7). David was horrified by the dishonorable actions of these two men, but he recognized that they had cleared a direct path to the throne (4:8–12).

According to 5:4–5, where did David live out the remainder of his reign after the death of Ishbosheth?

David expanded the boundaries of Israel from 6,000 to 60,000 square miles. He set up extensive trade routes that reached the known world. He unified the nation under Jehovah God. He put down the idol altars. He created a national interest in spiritual things. He was a remarkable man. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: David Rises and Falls

The book of 2 Samuel urges its readers to wrestle with an important question: How did David fall from being such a great hero of faith? This question will guide our interpretation of the first chapters of 2 Samuel.

Why was it significant that David moved his royal residence from Hebron to Jerusalem in 2 *Samuel* 5:6–15? (Hint: 1 *Samuel* 27:10 says that David spent much of his time running from Saul in the *Negev*, the southern portion of Israel.)



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David didn't lose his heart for God overnight. Rather, with each unfaithful decision—small as they may have seemed to David—he gradually acted more like selfish-Saul than the faithful shepherd-boy Samuel had anointed years earlier.

We're often better at handling affliction than we are at handling promotions.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The narrative explains the beginning of this decline in [2 Samuel 3:2–6](#) and [5:14–15](#) by focusing on David's many marriages. Why was it problematic that David accumulated multiple wives? For help answering this question, see [Deuteronomy 17:14–20](#), the God-given job description for Israel's king.

David's sin looked like a cascade of falling dominoes—one bad decision leading to many others. Later, his insatiable lust for Bathsheba drove him to do horrible things ([2 Samuel 11:1–27](#)). And his children followed his sinful example too. One son, Absalom, staged a coup against his father ([15:1–12](#)), and another son, Amnon, raped his own sister ([13:1–19](#)).



Correlation: A Leader Who Serves

Even though his heart was gradually drifting from God, David had an important realization after the construction of the palace in Jerusalem: “The LORD had confirmed him as king over Israel and had blessed his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel” ([2 Samuel 5:12](#)). God placed David on Israel's greatest seat of power—not for his *own* benefit but for the benefit of *others*.



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When He predicted His own death in [Matthew 20:17–28](#), King Jesus warned His disciples about adopting self-serving attitudes. According to Jesus in [20:25](#), how do the rulers of the world use their power and authority?

How are citizens of the kingdom of heaven to act *differently* than the rulers of the world, according to [20:26–28](#)? Who modeled this behavior perfectly? How?

In what ways did David act more like a worldly ruler rather than a true follower of God?

As David increased his fame, wealth, and power, he didn't use these gifts to serve God and Israel. He used them for his own glory. While few today have the kind of influence David had, many will face the same temptations David did.



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Application: Preventing Decline before It Begins

At different points in David's decline, he fell prey to four particularly insidious temptations: silver, sloth, sex, and self. Which of these four temptations do you tend toward? How have you been able to resist its attacks in the past?

To help you fight these temptations, Pastor Chuck Swindoll offers two timeless principles for you to remember and act upon.

First, *no personal pursuit is more important than cultivating godliness in your family*. Yes, David built a kingdom. But he neglected to build a godly family. Which is more important? What practical steps can you take today to cultivate godliness in your own family?



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Second, *no character trait needs more attention than genuine integrity*. A small slip in David's integrity created a landslide of sin that trapped David far from God for years. You may feel like David, caught in a cycle of sin. But God always provides His children with a way out (*1 Corinthians 10:13*). In the space below, write a prayer of confession and repentance.

Sadly, David's spiritual fall was a long, drawn-out process, and the sins he committed grew gradually more egregious. David's example is a warning that a small slip in integrity can lead anyone down a wrong path away from God. **Take heed!**



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for holding fast to me even when I feel my heart drifting from You. I ask You to produce in me godly integrity so I might lead a life of faithful service to You. I pray these things in Jesus' faithful name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

