

The Story of 1 Samuel

A 40-Day Guided Journey through 1 Samuel



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church
Week 8: June 27-July 3

Day 1

June 29



Pray / As you open today, thank God for the relationship you have with him and the ability you have to hear him. Pray that you would grow and hear more of him.

Saul is leading God's people, but void of God, whom he has pushed away. Now with impending doom just over the next hill, he desperately takes other measures to assure victory.

Saul has repeatedly rejected God and replaced God with himself as the Israelites' leader and ruler. God gave Saul what he asked for and removed himself from a close relationship with him. With the Philistines' victory imminent, Saul is desperate for direction from God. The prophet Samuel has passed away, and Saul can no longer hear God's voice. He tries reaching Samuel through a medium, breaking his (and God's) own commandment against sorcery. God commands his people not to seek mediums, sorcerers, and spiritists (see Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; 2 Kings 21:6; Isaiah 8:19–20). We must seek God through his Word and prayer, measuring everything we hear with the Bible.



Read / 1 Samuel 28:1–25



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Saul, due to his own doing, was unable to hear from God. When have you noticed your straying from building your relationship with God, directly affecting your ability to hear from him?

God spoke to his people through prophets and priests during this time, but now those of us who are believers have access to him. In what ways do you hear God most often? What is the most surprising way in which you've heard God?

Saul is so desperate for help that he breaks one of God's commandments in seeking out a medium. When have you been desperate for answers and strayed from what you know is right out of desperation? What was the result in your life and then in your walk with God?

Day 2

June 30



Pray / For wisdom to navigate life's sticky and moral dilemmas.

David, in his escape from Saul, is hiding in the midst of the Philistines. However, he is now being faced with a moral dilemma. God steps in with his unique and unrelenting mercy and grace, and the moral dilemma is averted.

In 1 Samuel 27:1 we see David make the decision to hide from Saul in a very unlikely place: in the midst of Israelite's enemies, the Philistines. In 1 Samuel 29:1–11, David is in a very awkward situation as the Philistine commander, King Achish, joins forces with other Philistine kings to fight and ultimately defeat the Israelite army. David carefully tries to navigate this situation. Fortunately this was no surprise to God, who already had a plan unfolding. The Philistine kings will not allow David and his men to fight with them. They don't trust David's allegiance and force King Achish to send David home. David perhaps feigns offense but leaves nonetheless.



Read / 1 Samuel 29:1–11



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

As followers of Christ we are constantly swimming upstream, so to speak, trying to stay in the world but not of it (as Jesus prays in John 17:14–16). When has your faith put you in an awkward situation that was difficult to manage? Were you happy with how you managed it? How can you grow and learn from your choices for the next time?

David's choice to hide among the Philistines may have been, or seemed like, the best or only option at the time. But it seems inevitable that he would end up in a sticky situation. When have you inadvertently put yourself in a situation that you struggled to get out of? How did God work in spite of you?

How can you come alongside someone in your life who is in the midst of the consequences of poor decisions? How can you show God's mercy and grace to them instead of judgment or shame?

Day 3

July 1



Pray / Thank God that even though you will suffer in life, he is always with you. Let that knowledge keep your troubles in perspective.

Even with God’s powerful hand on him, David experiences pain. But in that pain he finds strength in the Lord his God.

Commentator Dale Ralph Davis tells us that Psalms 1–41 confirm the fact that “Being God’s king did not exempt David from suffering and from problems. Remember too that this drove David to God and not from him.”¹

Many people in the Bible suffered, including Jesus, God’s own Son. We sometimes wonder why we should have to suffer in life. If we can look past the suffering, we can see how David and Jesus responded to the suffering. David “strengthened himself in God” (1 Samuel 30:6), and Jesus reached out to his Father as well (see Luke 22:42–44; 23:34; 23:46).



Read / 1 Samuel 30:1–6



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Do you feel that your relationship with God or your good behavior should exempt you from trouble? Do your struggles push you closer to God or pull you from him? How does this perspective of David's and Jesus' suffering, and subsequent strengthening, apply to your troubles?

In a time of struggle, we need to remember God's promises. Take some time to write down some of these promises for reference later, at a time when you or someone close to you needs them. Write down promises God has made to you specifically as well as promises to all who love him and follow him. Add some Scripture verses like Psalm 23; Nahum 1:7; and Hebrews 4:16 as reminders.

If David hadn't suffered, he wouldn't have experienced God's strengthening him. According to Matthew 5:3–9, we are comforted and strengthened when we mourn and face crises. How does this compare with Romans 8:17–18 and 2 Corinthians 1:3–7 in your life?

1. Dale Ralph Davis, *First Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 321.

Day 4

July 2



*Pray / Thank God for partnering with you and fighting for you.
Confess your propensity to take credit for yourself, and remember that all
you have is from him alone.*

In this passage, David and his army experience victory, and David gives the credit to God.

When David and his men arrive home, they find that the Amalekites have ransacked their villages and taken their families and possessions. David seeks God, who tells him to pursue the Amalekites, promising victory. Some men are too exhausted to continue the pursuit, so with David's blessing, they hang back. David and the rest of his men defeat the Amalekites and return home with their spoils. Some men who pursued the Amalekites argue that the others should not partake in the spoils. David gently and authoritatively rebukes them as he gives glory to God for their victory.



Read / 1 Samuel 30:1–31



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Reflect on John 3:27, Romans 12:3, 6; and 1 Corinthians 4:7. Reflect on the big and small things you have physically, emotionally, and spiritually that are gifts from God.

When do you feel entitled to the “spoils” or rewards of your own hard work? David recognizes in a number of the passages we’ve studied that if things had gone as he wanted them to, the outcomes would have been very different. God was in control, so the glory goes to him. How, then, does this affect your perspective of the gifts you have that have been given to you?

Reflect on the ways in which you’ve seen your life take a very different path than you expected and how you’ve seen God’s hand in it. What is one particular situation, and how did God move?

Day 5

July 3



Pray / Ask God to grow you into someone who seeks him continually.

Today ask for direction for a seemingly small, insignificant task.

We hear of believers and nonbelievers alike calling out to God in desperate circumstances, hoping for victory or peace or healing for the moment. But a lasting relationship with God brings lasting peace, comfort and victories.

Saul has spent much of his life as king rejecting God. Now, when defeat is imminent, he runs back to God—not in humility and repentance, but out of fear of loss, failure, and defeat. Unfortunately, in 1 Samuel 28:16–19 God’s word is reiterated and comes to pass as Saul’s sons are killed and Saul takes his own life (see 31:1–4).

David, too, seems to be experiencing defeat at the hands of the Amalekites, and he, too, seeks God—but out of relationship with him. He is given direction and then victory.



Read / 1 Samuel 28:16-19; 30:1–8; 31:1–13



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Saul seeks God out of fear of loss rather than love for God. When have you done something similar? What led you to that prayer, and what was the result? How did your relationship with him change then?

Read John 6:67–68. The disciples acknowledge there is no better option for life than Jesus. Where can you go for the peace, love, and victory that Jesus brings? Where do you have a tendency to go instead of Jesus, and why?

Often during difficult times, those who normally wouldn't do so cry out to God for help or relief. When this happens to those close to you, will they know they can come to you for prayer? How can you be ready to support them and give them God's mercy and grace to lead them to his heart?

When life is good, disaster is averted, or a crisis is over, what happens with your relationship with God? Do you continue to remember him in the day to day, or do you sometimes take control of your life again until the next crisis?

Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

www.fiveoakchurch.org

