

 **highrock**  
CHURCH



# DAVID

THE LIFE OF A COMPLICATED KING

**SERIES COMPANION**

# INTRODUCTION

Ever wondered how a shepherd boy slayed a giant, became King, and then faced betrayal, heartbreak, and profound moral failures, yet still be called a man after God's own heart? Join us for "David: A Life of a Complicated King," a new summer sermon series exploring the extraordinary highs and devastating lows of one of the Bible's most complex figures.

We'll delve into the messy, often contradictory, yet ultimately redemptive journey of King David and learn how God remains faithful, even when we come to the limits of our human talent and capacity.

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Here we provide space to take notes on the sermon and Scripture text and answer reflection questions that you can discuss with others. When considering the reflection questions, remember that the goal is not to have all the "right" answers—instead, let these questions serve as a starting point for curiosity in your conversation with God and others. See the Appendix of this guide for more resources and opportunities to engage with this study.

Please note this discussion guide is created before the series begins. Discussion questions are prepared before the sermons are written and based on the theme and text for the week. Thank you for your understanding that the topic and focus of the sermon as the pastor writes it may differ from what is written in the discussion questions.

## APPENDIX (page 21)

Offers a deeper dive into the topic as well as resources for Bible study, leading small groups, and links for further support.

- Additional Resources
- Online Bibles
- Prayer Tools
- "Icebreaker" Questions
- Tips for Guiding Conversations
- General Resources for Individual Support

## SERMON SCHEDULE & SCRIPTURE READING

*\*Subject to change at the discretion of the pastors.*

Sermon	Topic & Scripture Passage
Week 1	David anointed: 1 Samuel 16:1-13
Week 2	David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17
Week 3	David spares Saul: 1 Samuel 24
Week 4	David and Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11-12

Week 5	Family turmoil, Absalom's rebellion: 2 Samuel 15
Week 6	David worships and passes the baton to Solomon: 1 Chronicles 29:1-22

# WEEKLY FORMAT

## SERMON DISCUSSION

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT:** Listen to the sermon, read weekly selections/view video links (if provided), read scripture passages, and answer reflection questions. (30-40 mins)

**RELATE:** Discuss reflection questions with your small group. (50 mins)

**PRAY:** Use the suggested prayer prompt to conclude your time (5-10 mins)

# CONVERSATION COVENANT

We hope all small group discussions are lively and enriching, but sometimes tough topics will be discussed. The Conversation Covenant\* is an agreement to hold respect and grace toward all participants within a small group, no matter the conversation. Please adhere to the Conversation Covenant or consider creating one that fits your context.

\*Adapted from <https://conversational-leadership.net/conversation-covenant/>

I pledge:

**To act in good faith, with curiosity.** I will assume the best about my conversation partners when entering into our groups. I will give the benefit of the doubt, recognizing that they may know something I don't.

**To show respect.** I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard to the feelings and traditions of others. I understand that I do not have to agree with someone to show them respect.

**To speak the truth.** I won't use rhetorical tricks to try to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the nuanced truth.

**To aim to discover the truth.** I will not enter into a conversation with the purpose of changing the mind of anyone to my way of thinking.

**To focus on what we can change.** I will focus on what we can do differently in the future since we cannot change what we did in the past.

**To take responsibility for the conversation.** I will take responsibility for the quality of the conversation and the abidance of the rules both in principle and in spirit.

**To follow the covenant even when others fail to do so.** I will abide by the rules regardless of whether another person breaks them.

**To respect the confidentiality of the group.** I will not share the stories of group members verbally or in written form (including on social media and online outlets).

**To lighten up and approach the conversation in good humor.** I recognize that humor is a hallmark of a constructive, generative conversation and take the conversation in good humor.

# PREPARE

The following questions are jumping-off points for personal reflection. Engage with them to awaken your awareness of themes in this sermon series. Pay attention to the questions that stand out to you and look back on them throughout the series to see how God might be speaking to you.

## CONSIDER

- What, if anything, are your first impressions of King David? Do you know David from the Bible? From popular stories? What kind of person do you perceive him to be?
- Have you considered King David as a 'complicated' figure before? What might be helpful about this for you? What might be challenging?
- In studying a single person in the Bible (and their wider relationships in the story of Scripture), how do you think you can best prepare yourself to learn, to think about David alongside others, and to grow spiritually? List some ideas below:

# WEEK 1: David anointed

## 1 Samuel 16:1-13

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. How did this sermon help set the stage for what we'll be focusing on? What are one or two themes that you'd personally like to focus on in this and upcoming discussions?
3. What does it mean for you to look at David as a 'complicated' king? Have you thought about this before? How might it be challenging and/or helpful for you?
4. David's story and this sermon series emphasize that things are not always as they appear. God works in unexpected ways. If you could ask God to do something unexpected in your life right now, what would it be? What could it look like to become more open to being surprised by God?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | God, we look at outward appearances, but you look into the heart. You value things we struggle to value, but you pursue us. You find us. You can surprise us. Make us open to your ways, and begin to work on our minds and spirits, helping us see people around us as you see them. Amen.

## 1 Samuel 16:1-13

1 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

4 Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

5 Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." 9 Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." 10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11 So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

12 So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one."

13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

# WEEK 2: David and Goliath

## 1 Samuel 17

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 1 Samuel 17, or the selected parts that were used in the sermon

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. This story is familiar to many of us. Did this sermon bring out any new insights or perspectives on it for you?
3. What has trusting God meant for you recently? How can you tell when you're actively trusting God, struggling to trust God, or somewhere in between?
4. David's previous work as a shepherd and protector of the flock becomes unexpectedly useful. Have you seen God use something from your past in a surprising way? What effect did that have on you?
5. This passage shows that God often sees things differently than we do. As you consider what's happening in your life right now, how might a new perspective on something (relationships, causes you care about, or perhaps want to care about more) help you as well?

**PRAY** | God, you work in surprising ways. Give us the strength we need to take courage in the decisions we make this week. May your Spirit help us imagine and work for new possibilities in our lives and the world around us. Amen.

## 1 Samuel 17\*

\* For a shorter reading, check the sermon to see which passages were used from this chapter.

1 Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. 2 Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. 3 The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

4 A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.<sup>[a]</sup> 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels<sup>[b]</sup>; 6 on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. 7 His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels.<sup>[c]</sup> His shield bearer went ahead of him.

8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." 11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was very old. 13 Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, 15 but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16 For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.

17 Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah[d] of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. 18 Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance[e] from them. 19 They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."

20 Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. 21 Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. 22 David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. 23 As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. 24 Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear.

25 Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel."

26 David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

27 They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him."

28 When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."

29 "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?" 30 He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. 31 What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.

32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

"I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"

45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

50 So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

51 David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. 52 Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath<sup>[1]</sup> and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. 53 When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp.

54 David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem; he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.

55 As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young man?"

Abner replied, "As surely as you live, Your Majesty, I don't know."

56 The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is."

57 As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.

58 "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him.

David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

# WEEK 3: David spares Saul's life

## 1 Samuel 24

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 1 Samuel 24, or the select parts that were used in the sermon

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. What from the sermon helped shed light on parts of this Scripture passage, like the significance of David cutting off part of King Saul's robe?
3. How does David's interaction with King Saul demonstrate trust in God, giving up control?
4. Drawing from the sermon, where does grace and mercy show up in this passage? How can that connect to your own life and where God might be at work?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | God, we trust that you are involved in all parts of our lives. Help us acknowledge that, and to turn our lives over to you, trusting in your grace and provision. Provider of all that we need, we give you thanks.

## 1 Samuel 24

1 After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." 2 So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats.

3 He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. 4 The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

5 Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. 6 He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." 7 With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9 He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? 10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the LORD's anointed.' 11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. 12 May the LORD judge between you and me. And may

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the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. 13 As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you.

14 "Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? 15 May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand."

16 When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. 17 "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. 18 You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. 19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today. 20 I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. 21 Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

22 So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

# WEEK 4: David and Bathsheba

## 2 Samuel 11-12

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 2 Samuel 11-12, or the select parts that were used in the sermon

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Drawing from these stories and the sermon, how are you coming to see a wider picture of David's character?
3. These stories highlight David's sins and the harm he inflicts on others through his actions. What thoughts or emotions do these stories elicit for you? Are there specific characters that you find yourself mourning for in particular in this story?
4. Consider the prophet Nathan's message and reflect on these two practical questions:
  - How does Nathan's message reveal how things went wrong in David's life, on one hand, and what might we learn here about living transparently (before others and God) and personal accountability, on the other?
  - How can these stories help direct us to pray for those in our world and those around us who are experiencing suffering or loss from the impact of others' actions?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | God, give us the grace, wisdom and strength we need to do your will. When we do wrong, help us earnestly turn from our ways and seek forgiveness and restoration; for those who have been wronged, including those we have wronged, we pray for your healing presence. May your mercy come and your justice and righteousness flow like a river. Amen.

## 2 Samuel 11-12

\* For a shorter reading, check the sermon to see which passages were used from this chapter.

1 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3 and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." 4 Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

6 So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. 9 But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

10 David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?"

11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

12 Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

16 So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 17 When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

18 Joab sent David a full account of the battle. 19 He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, 20 the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?' 21 Who killed Abimelek son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.'"

22 The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. 23 The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance of the city gate. 24 Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

25 David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."

26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 27 After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

#### Nathan Rebukes David

12 The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

11 "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. 16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

19 David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

20 Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

21 His attendants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; 25 and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.

26 Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel. 27 Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah and taken its water supply. 28 Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will take the city, and it will be named after me."

29 So David mustered the entire army and went to Rabbah, and attacked and captured it. 30 David took the crown from their king's head, and it was placed on his own head. It weighed a talent of gold, and it was set with precious stones. David took a great quantity of plunder from the city 31 and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brickmaking. David did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

# WEEK 5: Family Turmoil: Absalom's Rebellion

## 2 Samuel 15

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 2 Samuel 15, or select parts used in the sermon

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Drawing from the sermon and Scripture passages, how do you see previous actions of David having an impact on other generations of his family? Have you experienced anything similar in your life or relationship with others?
3. What signs indicate (some degree of) change in David's personality? Can you think of a way where you've learned something or grown in your faith following a failure?
4. What could it look like to trust that God is present amidst the challenges or conflicts you're facing right now? How might you try to grow as a person and in your faith? Consider looking at the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 as you do this.
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | God, amidst the challenges of life, we trust that you are present. Whether or not we bring those challenges on ourselves, help us proceed with humility and an openness to learn from you and others. You are the living God; accompany us in our ways this week. Amen.

## 2 Samuel 15

In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. 2 He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." 4 And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."

5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. 6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

7 At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the LORD. 8 While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.'"

9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he went to Hebron.

10 Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" 11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. 12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept on increasing.

David Flees

13 A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom."

14 Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword."

15 The king's officials answered him, "Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses."

16 The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace. 17 So the king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at the edge of the city. 18 All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.

19 The king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland. 20 You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your people with you. May the LORD show you kindness and faithfulness."

21 But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be."

22 David said to Ittai, "Go ahead, march on." So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.

23 The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the wilderness.

24 Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.

25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. 26 But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."

27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Do you understand? Go back to the city with my blessing. Take your son Ahimaaz with you, and also Abiathar's son Jonathan. You and Abiathar return with your two sons. 28 I will wait at the fords in the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." 29 So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

30 But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. 31 Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

32 When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. 33 David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'Your Majesty, I will be your servant; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. 35 Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace. 36 Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear."

37 So Hushai, David's confidant, arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

# WEEK 6: David worships and passes the baton to Solomon

## 1 Chronicles 29:1-22

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Chronicles 29:1-22

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Where do you see joy and celebration in this story? Where does it come from (or, what is its cause)?
3. Read David's short prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:9-13 together. What feelings or thoughts does it stir for you? What reasons do you have to be thankful in your life right now? What's something you're regularly grateful for, and what's something you'd like to be more thankful for?
4. Where do you see change or growth in this final picture of David we're looking at in this series? As you reflect on your own life, where do you hope to see change and transformation in your faith and relationship with God and the church? Taking stock, what's a step towards this change that you can take?

**PRAY** | God, thank you for remaining faithful to us. Like King David prayed, may our hearts acknowledge you more and more. All good things come from you. May a vision of your faithfulness and goodness help us carry on, today and tomorrow. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## 1 Chronicles 29:1-22

Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. 2 With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. 3 Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: 4 three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, 5 for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today?"

6 Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. 7 They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 Anyone who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

David's Prayer

10 David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

“Praise be to you, LORD,  
the God of our father Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.

11 Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power  
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,  
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;  
you are exalted as head over all.

12 Wealth and honor come from you;  
you are the ruler of all things.

In your hands are strength and power  
to exalt and give strength to all.

13 Now, our God, we give you thanks,  
and praise your glorious name.

14 “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 15 We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16 LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. 17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. 18 LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. 19 And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, statutes and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided.”

20 Then David said to the whole assembly, “Praise the LORD your God.” So they all praised the LORD, the God of their fathers; they bowed down, prostrating themselves before the LORD and the king.

#### Solomon Acknowledged as King

21 The next day they made sacrifices to the LORD and presented burnt offerings to him: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams and a thousand male lambs, together with their drink offerings, and other sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 22 They ate and drank with great joy in the presence of the LORD that day.

Then they acknowledged Solomon son of David as king a second time, anointing him before the LORD to be ruler and Zadok to be priest.

# APPENDIX

Below are resources to look into if you are interested in diving deeper into some of the topics covered in this series. If you need resources that more specifically address your own experience, demographic, or faith journey, please reach out to a Highrock pastor or to [smallgroups@highrock.org](mailto:smallgroups@highrock.org) and we will be happy to help!

## ONLINE BIBLES

- [Blue Letter Bible](#)
- [Bible Gateway](#)

## PRAYER TOOLS

- [The Prayer of Examen: Tracking Our Moods](#)
- [Breath Prayer/Prayer of the Heart](#)
- [Divine/Fixed Hour Prayer](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Imaginative Prayer Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Imaginative Prayer/Ignatian Contemplation](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Recall & Paraphrase Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Lament](#)
- [Laughter and Prayer](#)
- [Palms Up, Palms Down](#)
- [Pray a Psalm in a Nature Setting](#)
- [Praying with your Body](#)
- [Welcoming Prayer](#)

## “ICEBREAKER” QUESTIONS

- What was a small win from your week?
- Share a High/Low from your day or week.
- On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing coming into this meeting?
- If you were to describe yourself as a weather forecast today, what would you be? Example: sunny, partly cloudy, rainy with a chance of snow, etc.
- What song would be the theme track for the day you had?

## GENERAL RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- [Spiritual Practices](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Parenting & Kids—Understanding each other through Milestones](#)

## TIPS FOR GUIDING CONVERSATION

- Allow everyone space to share. It's ok to ask what people are thinking even if they don't volunteer to share right away. But always give people the option to decline to share. Example: "Hey, Fred, you've been a little quiet and I'm curious to know what you think. Would you like to share anything?"
- Remember there aren't necessarily "right" answers. Encourage participants to simply be curious about what came up for them or others without the pressure of feeling like they "should" have thought or felt anything in particular. Example: Instead of asking "What is this story supposed to be communicating?" ask "What did you notice?"

- Embrace the differences. Affirm that different people can come to different conclusions regarding the same thing. Example: "Interestingly, the text reminded Susie of ABC, while it reminded José of XYZ. Both can be present and true."
- Adapt to suit your group's needs. Sometimes conversation is free-flowing and sometimes it's easier to move through discussion questions one at a time. Do what feels suitable for your group, but don't feel pressured to answer/discuss every single question.
- Encourage curiosity by modeling curiosity. Asking someone "Tell me more about XYZ" can be a really simple but effective tool to go deeper in conversation.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It's natural to want to fill silences or pauses in a conversation. But don't be afraid to sit in silence with your group members. Sometimes thoughts just need time to percolate, so don't feel like you have to rush to another question if no one shares immediately.
- Refer back to the Conversation Covenant. This is the posture that we as Highrock hold as we gather in groups. When the conversation gets tough, you can always refer back to the Conversation Covenant to remind the group that everyone has agreed to abide by this covenant in small group meetings.