

**This Week's Main Focus**

God doesn't expect perfect obedience, but he requires a humble heart.

The book of Samuel is the tale of two kings: Saul and David. As David begins his ascension to the throne, Saul's demise begins to unfold before our eyes. Saul, in desperation, hunts down the heir apparent to his throne. And in ironic twists of fate, the hunter, Saul, finds himself vulnerable to the hunted on two separate occasions (1 Sam 24 and 26). Yet David refuses to play the role of the hunter because he realizes Saul remains enthroned as king and it is only the Lord who can remove him.

Eventually, David takes over the throne of Saul and as we see throughout his ascension, David consistently "inquires of the Lord" (the verb used is a play on words off of Saul's name in Hebrew). His continual inquiries of the Lord inform us that David is reliant on God...until 2 Samuel 11 when David abandons the Lord and His law and fails to "inquire" of Him. Instead, David sends a man to ask about the woman on the rooftop. UH OH! David has made a choice that has put himself in the wrong place at the wrong time, and then compounds that mistake by asking the wrong person the wrong question. Of course, David knows that if he inquires of the Lord as to what to do about Bathsheba, the Lord will tell him to get back inside his house! But David didn't want to hear that answer. So, he doesn't ask the Lord the question. And we know how the story ends. David commits both adultery and murder.

But wait. Isn't David "a man after God's own heart?" (1 Sam 13:14) But wait again. Didn't Saul lose his place on the throne for being disobedient? Yes...and yes.

Being a person after God's own heart does not mean living a life of perfect obedience. David shows us what it means in his response to being confronted with his sin. In 2 Samuel 12 the prophet Nathan calls David out for his horrendous decisions. And David responds with a recognition of his fallenness and his brokenness. Eventually he writes Psalm 51 as his 'heart response'. It's in this Psalm that we see what God desires for all of His children. Since we cannot offer Him perfect obedience, he simply wants us to be humble in heart, recognizing that we are broken and far from perfect. That is the sacrifice He desires from us; a broken and contrite heart and spirit (Psalm 51:17).

Thanks be to God that He would one day send Jesus, from the line of David, to live that perfect life of obedience and pay the penalty for our disobedience. His only requirement from us in response is to recognize our proneness to acting independently of Him and offering that recognition of our fallenness and brokenness through humility of heart. We do this by repenting of those ways, accepting Jesus, and then following Him.



From Hero to Zero

2 Samuel 11-12

SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you (or one of your children) purposefully avoided asking a question of someone else because you knew you wouldn't like the answer you'd receive from that person. Retell that story!

STUDY (about 30 min) Read 2 Samuel 11-12

1. Regarding this sermon, is there any truth that stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
2. Why do you think Saul refused to accept the Lord's verdict of the throne shifting to David? How do you think the story would have played out if Saul accepted the Lord's verdict?
3. Are there specific areas in your life that you can identify where you act 'independently' of God? Name them.
4. Why do you think David's heart hardened to the point it led to the Bathsheba and Uriah incidents?
5. What would it look like to approach certain areas of your life with 'open palms' like David, instead of 'white knuckles' like Saul? What does surrender look like for you?
6. When (if ever) has the Lord made it clear to you that he doesn't demand perfect obedience? Describe the process you went through of accepting (or rejecting) the truth that the Lord simply requires a humble heart that embraces the reality of our own brokenness.

SUPPORT

Share and Pray: Break up into 2's or 3's to pray for each other. Briefly share an area in your life where you are living independently from God and fail (purposely or not) to inquire of the Lord. Pray for each other that the Lord will help you to humble your heart and turn to Him in those specific areas!