

After
GOD'S
OWN HEART:

*David and the Search
for Significance*

STUDY GUIDE
August 2026

Introduction

David grew up as the youngest child in a culture that placed higher value on older children, yet again and again he defied expectations. His life shows a man searching for significance not primarily in status, power, or approval, but in seeking after God's own heart and living for an audience of One. At his best, David trusted God with courage, worshiped with unfiltered authenticity, led with courage, responded to failure with repentance, and received grace with humble gratitude.

But David's story is not only a story of triumph. When he searched for significance apart from God, his life began to unravel. Even then, his love for God became a compass guiding him home through grief, failure, and repentance. In this series, David's life helps believers consider their own search for significance and reminds them that even when they stray, hearts that still seek God's heart can find their way home.

How to Use This Guide

This study guide is designed for both groups and individuals. The sessions are designed to provide guidance through discussion, scripture, and prayer.

Each session includes:

- *Let's Pray* – Opening and closing prayers to focus the session on God.
- *Let's Get Started* – Questions that connect the biblical theme to daily life.
- *Let's Review* – A brief reflection on the previous week's practice; Session 1 has no review.
- *Let's Gain Information* – Teaching content explaining the session's main idea.
- *Let's Search Scripture* – Bible readings and discussion questions.
- *Let's Engage* – A practical next step for the coming week.

Additional Resources

The following additional resources are available to enrich your personal study as an individual or as a group leader.

Bible Reading Plan

- Use Concord United's series Bible Reading Plan, which includes scriptures that align with the weekly focus of the series about David. [Concord Resource Link](#)

Videos

- Study Guides videos created by Concord United found on our YouTube channel that aligns with the study guide. [Concord United YouTube Link](#).

Books

- Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*.
- Alter, Robert. *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*.
- Peterson, Eugene. *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality of Everyday Christians*.

Session 1

Throwing Stones at Giants

Week of August 2, 2026

Let's Pray

Faithful God, you see what others overlook and call people the world may underestimate. Thank you for the story of David, whose significance did not come from birth order, appearance, or worldly power, but from your calling and presence. Help us trust that you can use us for your purposes, even when the path ahead feels intimidating. Give us courage to face the giants that stand in the way of our obedience to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's Get Started

- Have you ever felt overlooked, underestimated, or dismissed by others? What was that experience like?
- What kinds of “giants” do people face today—fear, insecurity, opposition, temptation, failure, or something else?
- What usually keeps people from taking the path God has placed before them?

Let's Gain Information

David was chosen by God for kingship even though he was the youngest in a culture that valued older sons more highly. From the beginning, his story reminds believers that God often sees significance where others do not and calls people based on the heart rather than outward expectations.

In his youth, David showed remarkable faithfulness to God's call, even to the point of facing Goliath when others shrank back. His example raises a searching question for every believer: will they walk the path God has set before them, even when that path includes giants that seem stronger, louder, or more powerful than they are?

Let's Search Scripture

Read selected verses from 1 Samuel 16:1-13 & 1 Samuel 17:19-51

- What does David's anointing reveal about how God chooses people?
- What differences do you see between how David and others view Goliath?
- What does David's courage appear to rest on—self-confidence, skill, or trust in God?

Also read Psalm 23, Psalm 144, and Acts 13:22.

- Both Psalm 23 and Psalm 144 are attributed to David. How do these passages deepen the picture of David as a man after God's own heart?
- What do they suggest about where strength and confidence truly come from?
- In Acts 13:22, Paul specifically identifies David as a man after God's own heart. What does it mean to seek God's heart?

Let's Engage

Over the next week:

- Identify one "giant" in your own life that has been standing in the way of obedience or trust.
- Pray each day for the courage to face it with faith rather than avoidance.
- Take one concrete step toward that challenge, trusting that God's calling is greater than your fear.

Let's close in prayer:

Lord, when we feel small, remind us that you are great. When we feel overlooked, remind us that you see us clearly. Give us courage to face the giants before us, not in our own strength, but in the confidence that you are with us. Amen.

Session 2

Friendship, Fatigue, & Faithfulness

Week of August 9, 2026

Let's Pray

Most Holy God, Friend of Sinners, thank you for friendships that sustain us, responsibilities that shape us, and your presence that provides for us. Teach us what faithfulness looks like in personal relationships, leadership responsibilities, and seasons of exhaustion. Prevent us from taking matters into our own hands when trusting you feels too slow or too costly. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's Get Started

- Who has been a faithful friend in your life, and what made that friendship significant?
- How does fatigue affect your spiritual life, patience, or judgment?
- When have you been tempted to take control rather than wait on God?

Let's Review

Last week the focus was on David's calling and his courage in facing giants through trust in God. Share anything you noticed this week:

- What "giant" did you identify in your own life?
- Were you able to take one step toward it?
- What did you learn about fear, obedience, or trust?

Let's Gain Information

David's friendship with Jonathan helped preserve his life when Saul was trying to kill him, showing the importance of faithful friends in seasons of danger and uncertainty. At the same time, David remained faithful to the men under his care, even while worn down by exile and hardship, demonstrating the kind of leadership that remains responsible in the midst of fatigue.

Most importantly, David remained faithful to God by refusing to kill Saul when the opportunity arose, even though Saul was pursuing him unjustly. David's story teaches that faithfulness to God includes faithfulness in friendship, faithfulness in leadership even when exhausted, and faithfulness in restraint when revenge feels justified.

Let's Search Scripture

Read selected verses from 1 Samuel 18:1-9, 1 Samuel 19:1-17, & 1 Samuel 20:12-42.

- What stands out about David and Jonathan's friendship?
- How does David treat the people entrusted to him during a difficult season?
- Why does David refuse to strike Saul, and what does that reveal about his heart?

Also read Psalm 142.

- What does this psalm show about David's inner life during hardship?
- How can prayer help sustain faithfulness when people are weary or under pressure?

Let's Engage

Over the next week:

- Reach out to one friend who has supported you or may need encouragement.
- Pay attention to how fatigue is affecting your reactions, decisions, or spiritual habits.
- When frustration rises, pause before acting and ask, "Am I trusting God here, or trying to seize control myself?"

Let's close in prayer:

Gracious Lord, thank you for being faithful to your promises, steadfast in your love, and extravagant with your grace even when we are tired, pressured, or tempted. Strengthen friendships, renew weary hearts, and teach us to trust your timing instead of forcing our own. Amen.

Session 3

Authentic Worship

Week of August 16, 2026

Let's Pray

Lord of Heaven and Earth, you are worthy of worship that is true, joyful, and obedient. Free us from shallow performance, empty routine, and the need to appear eloquent, polished, and wise before others. Teach us to worship and to bring our full selves before you with reverence and joy. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's Get Started

- What makes worship feel authentic to you?
- When are people most tempted to make worship about personal preference rather than God's direction?
- Why do many people feel self-conscious about expressing joy, passion, or surrender in worship?

Let's Review

Last week's session explored friendship, fatigue, and faithfulness in David's years in exile. Share briefly:

- Did you notice any connection between fatigue and your faithfulness this week?
- Were you able to pause and trust God rather than taking matters into your own hands?

Let's Gain Information

David followed God's instructions in bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, showing that authentic worship begins not with human preference but with God's direction. Worship is not primarily about what feels comfortable or impressive; it is about honoring God on God's terms.

In the procession, David worshiped so passionately that he embarrassed his wife, Michal, by dancing before the Lord. His example reveals two important truths: authentic worship is grounded in obedience to God, and it involves bringing one's full self before God rather than protecting dignity or appearances.

Let's Search Scripture

Read selected verses from 2 Samuel 6:12-23.

- What does this chapter teach about the holiness of God and the importance of following God's instruction?
- What does David's dancing reveal about his heart in worship?
- Why does Michal react negatively, and what might that say about different attitudes toward worship?

Also read 1 Chronicles 13:5-8, Psalm 63, and Psalm 132.

- How do these passages deepen the themes of longing for God, reverence, and joyful praise?
- What is the difference between worship shaped by God and worship shaped mainly by personal taste?

Let's Engage

Over the next week:

- Spend time in worship each day, even briefly, focusing less on mood and more on God's worthiness.
- Notice whether you tend to approach worship as a participant, a spectator, or a critic.
- Offer God one honest expression of praise, confession, gratitude, or longing without worrying about how polished it sounds.

Let's close in prayer:

Glorious God, teach us to worship you in spirit and in truth. Remove pride, fear, and self-consciousness, and help us bring our whole hearts before you in reverence and delight. Amen.

Session 4

Sex, Lies, & Grace?!

Week of August 23, 2026

Let's Pray

Merciful God, you know how quickly the human heart can drift into temptation, self-justification, and hidden sin. Give us honesty, humility, and courage. Protect us from entitlement, expose what needs to be confessed, and remind us that your grace is real for those who truly repent. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's Get Started

- Why is entitlement so spiritually dangerous?
- In what kinds of situations are people most likely to rationalize sin?
- Why is it often easier to notice serious sin in others than in ourselves?

Let's Review

The previous session focused on authentic worship and on bringing one's full self before God in obedience and joy. Share briefly:

- Did you notice any patterns in how you approach worship?
- What happened when you tried to worship more honestly and less self-consciously?

Let's Gain Information

After leading Israel to great prosperity and power, David gave in to a spirit of entitlement. He remained in the comfort of Jerusalem instead of going out with his army, committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then arranged for her husband Uriah's death when the affair could not be hidden. David's story shows how quickly privilege, comfort, and self-centered desire can distort judgment.

The prophet Nathan eventually confronted David, and David repented. Astonishingly, God forgave him, and David changed his ways. This episode teaches that no one is immune to entitlement—not even a man after God's own heart—and that believers must repent as soon as they recognize its presence rather than waiting for its consequences to become public.

Let's Search Scripture

Read 2 Samuel 11:1–12:25.

- Where do you first see warning signs in David's behavior?
- How does one sinful choice lead to another in this story?
- What role does Nathan play, and why is confrontation sometimes an act of grace?
- What does David's response reveal about genuine repentance?

Also read Psalm 51.

- What does this psalm teach about confession, brokenness, and mercy?
- Which words or phrases stand out most to you, and why?

Let's Engage

Over the next week:

- Ask God to reveal any subtle forms of entitlement, secrecy, or self-justification growing in your heart.
- Read Psalm 51 slowly and prayerfully each day during the week.
- If the Spirit brings something specific to mind, confess it honestly to God and, if needed, to a trusted Christian who can help you walk in repentance.

Let's close in prayer:

Merciful God, shield us from hidden sin and hard-heartedness. When we fall, lead us quickly to repentance. Restore in us clean hearts, renewed spirits, and the joy of your salvation. Amen.

Session 5

Absalom & Solomon Week of August 30, 2026

Let's Pray

Living God, you know the sorrow of loss and the hope of passing on wisdom to the next generation. Help us learn from David's grief, grace, and final counsel. Teach us to mourn what is broken, to love those who stray, and to finish life with hearts turned toward your ways. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's Get Started

- What kinds of grief shape a person most deeply?
- How do people hold together celebration and sorrow when both are present at the same time?
- If you could pass one lesson on to the next generation, what would it be?

Let's Review

Last week's session centered on David's sin, Nathan's confrontation, and the grace that meets genuine repentance. Share anything you are comfortable sharing:

- Did Psalm 51 speak to you in a new way?
- What did you learn about repentance, confession, or grace?

Let's Gain Information

David's later years were marked by grief as well as wisdom. His son Absalom attempted to overthrow him, and although David's kingdom was restored, he deeply mourned Absalom's death. The outline presents David's grief as a reflection of God's own heart, mourning wayward sinners even while justice unfolds.

At the end of his life, David chose Solomon as his successor and urged him to walk in God's ways. In both wrestling with grief and preparing to pass on his legacy, David shows where true significance is found: in extending grace, grieving what is lost, and affirming that every truly good thing in life comes through faithfulness to God.

Let's Search Scripture

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-18 & 2 Samuel 18-19:8

- What stands out to you about David's response to Absalom?
- How does David hold together kingship, sorrow, and love?

Read 1 Kings 1:28-37 & 1 Kings 2:1-12

- What priorities shape David's counsel to Solomon?

Also read Psalm 3 and Psalm 72.

- How do these psalms reflect themes of trust, kingship, justice, and dependence on God?
- What do they suggest about the kind of legacy David hoped to leave?

Let's Engage

Over the next week:

- Pray for one person who has wandered from God, from wisdom, or from healthy relationships.
- Reflect on the kind of spiritual legacy you are building through your words, choices, and example.
- Consider one piece of godly counsel you want to pass on to someone younger in faith or age, and look for a chance to share it.

Let's close in prayer:

God Almighty, thank you for meeting us in both triumph and sorrow. Teach us to mourn with your compassion, to finish with faithfulness, and to leave behind a legacy that points others toward your ways. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.