

connect 360

BIBLE TEACHING GUIDE

Triumphs & Troubles

A STUDY OF
2 Samuel

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John Duncan • Ronnie & Renate Hood
Rusty Walton • Eric Wickman • Patrick Wilson



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Triumphs and Troubles (2 Samuel)—Connect 360 Bible Teaching Guide

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How to Make the Best Use of This *Teaching Guide*

Leading a class in studying the Bible is a sacred trust. This *Teaching Guide* has been prepared to help you as you give your best to this important task.

In each lesson, you will find first “Bible Comments” for teachers, to aid you in your study and preparation. The three sections of “Bible Comments” are “Understanding the Context,” “Interpreting the Scriptures,” and “Focusing on the Meaning.” “Understanding the Context” provides a summary overview of the entire background passage that also sets the passage in the context of the Bible book being studied. “Interpreting the Scriptures” provides verse-by-verse comments on the focal passage. “Focusing on the Meaning” offers help with the meaning and application of the focal text.

The second main part of each lesson is “Teaching Plans.” You’ll find two complete teaching plans in this section. The first is called the “Discovery Plan,” which emphasizes discovery learning techniques; and the second is called the “Discussion Plan,” which provides questions and suggestions for dialogue about the Scriptures. Choose the plan that best fits your class and your style of teaching. You may also use and adapt ideas from both. Each plan is intended to be practical, helpful, and immediately useful as you prepare to teach.

The major headings in each teaching plan are intended to help you sequence how you teach so as to follow the flow of how people tend to learn. The first major heading, “Connect with Life,” provides ideas that will help you begin the class session where your class is and draw your class into the study. The second major heading, “Guide Bible Study,” offers suggestions for helping your class engage the Scriptures actively and develop a greater understanding of this portion of the Bible’s message. The third major heading, “Encourage Application,” is meant to help participants focus on how to respond with their lives to this message.

As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. You might use one or more of the following methods:

In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents in their *Study Guides* and on the first page of each lesson.

- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
- If all of your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
- Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.baptistwaypress.org under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
- Develop a sticker with the lesson dates, and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.

Here are some steps you can take to help you prepare well to teach each lesson and save time in doing so:

Start early in the week before your class meets.

1. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers meet for lesson overview and preparation, plan to participate. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers don’t have this planning time now, look for ways to begin. You, your fellow teachers, and your church will benefit from this mutual encouragement and preparation.
2. Overview the study in the *Study Guide*. Look at the table of contents, and see where this lesson fits in the overall study. Then read or review the study introduction to the book that is being studied.
3. Consider carefully the suggested Main Idea, Question to Explore, and Teaching Aim. These can help you discover the main thrust of this particular lesson.

4. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. Using your Bible in your study and in the class session can provide a positive model to class members to use their own Bibles and give more attention to Bible study themselves. (Each writer of the Bible comments in both the *Teaching Guide* and the *Study Guide* has chosen a favorite translation. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translations chosen, of course.)
5. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the Bible comments in the *Study Guide*. The Bible comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible. Read also the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and you can also use them in the class session itself. Continue your Bible study with the aid of the Bible comments included in this *Teaching Guide*.
6. Review the "Teaching Plans" in this *Teaching Guide*. Consider how these suggestions would help you teach this Bible passage in your class to accomplish the teaching aim.
7. Consider prayerfully the needs of your class, and think about how to teach so you can help your class learn best.
8. Develop and follow a lesson plan based on the suggestions in this *Teaching Guide*, with alterations as needed for your class.
9. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

Premium Commentary. Plan to get the additional Bible study comments available online. Visit our website, call 1-866-249-1799, or e-mail baptistway@texasbaptists.org to order the *Premium Commentary*. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website. The price of these comments is \$5 per person. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Commentary* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see www.baptistwaypress.org for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

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FREE! Downloadable teaching resource items for use in your class are available at www.baptistwaypress.org. Watch for them in the “Teaching Plans” for each lesson. Then go online to www.baptistwaypress.org and click on “Teaching Resource Items” under the “Teacher Helps” tab for this study. These items are selected from the “Teaching Plans.” They are provided online to make lesson preparation easier for handouts and similar items. Permission is granted to download these teaching resource items, print them out, copy them as needed, and use them in your class.

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Triumphs and Troubles

A Study of 2 Samuel

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lesson 1

A Bittersweet Victory

MAIN IDEA

The deaths of Saul and Jonathan grieved David, while also solidifying his position as king.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Why was David grieved by the defeat of his enemy?

TEACHING AIM

To lead adults to understand the inherent value of all people, including their enemies



Bible Comments

Understanding the Context

The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel chronicle the rise of the Israelite monarchy. At the beginning of 1 Samuel, no king ruled Israel; the prophet Samuel was its leader. However, when Samuel grew old, the people of Israel did not trust the prophet's sons, and so they demanded he appoint a king (1 Sam. 8:1–9). Begrudgingly, Samuel chose a man named Saul, who was initially obedient to God but later became more interested in his own power than in obeying God (10:1, 15:1–10).

Thus, God anointed David as king (16:6–13). David became a mighty warrior for Saul, but he did not try to wrest the throne from him. David also developed a close relationship with Saul's son Jonathan (18:1) and married Saul's daughter Michal (18:20–28). Saul became jealous of David and tried to kill him (18:6–9). David hid from Saul, and the two became enemies (21:10). Saul died at the battle of Mt. Gilboa (31:1–7).

An Amalekite messenger came to David and told him that he had killed Saul (2 Samuel 1:1–10). But David did not rejoice, even though his long-time enemy was dead. Instead, he ordered the death of the messenger for killing God's anointed king (1:11–16). David then mourned for Saul and his close friend Jonathan (1:1–27). Following God's instructions, David became king of Judah, but not all of Israel (1:1–4).¹

Interpreting the Scriptures

Saul's Death Reported (1:1–5)

1:1. The death of Saul is first described in 1 Samuel 31. The Amalekites were a tribe from the deserts south of Judah. They had long been the enemies of the Israelites, and the two nations fought fiercely for hundreds of years (Exodus 17:14, Deuteronomy 25:17–19, 1 Sam. 14:48, 15).

1:2. The messenger arrived with his clothes torn and dirt on his head, which indicated he was distraught or grieving. It could be surmised that he made himself appear this way to help sell his story.

1:3–4. The urgency with which David asked the messenger for a report of the battle indicated David was a loyal Israelite, even though he was camped at Ziklag (1:1), a city given to him by the Israelites' enemies, the Philistines (1 Sam. 30:1–31). The split between Saul and David grieved him. The first part of the messenger's story that the Israelite army fled from the battle is consistent with the report in 1 Samuel 31:1. Thus, the messenger likely witnessed the battle, if not a combatant himself. However, he only reported the death of Saul and Jonathan, he did not mention Saul's other sons, Abinidab and Malchishua (31:2).

1:5. David asked the messenger how he knew about the death of Saul. Whether David suspected the messenger was lying is unknown. The messenger's Amalekite identity (1:8) may have evoked suspicion, but this is only speculation.

The Story Unravels (1:6–16)

1:6–9. The messenger's story contradicts the account given in 1 Samuel 31:1–7. The Amalekite said that chariots and horsemen overtook Saul, but in the previous account archers first wounded Saul. The messenger did not mention anything about Saul pleading with his armor-bearer to kill him. The messenger also said that he had killed Saul, while the previous account indicated that Saul took his own life.

1:10. The messenger then revealed his purpose in bringing David the report. He had stripped Saul of his crown and armband, symbols of his position as king of Israel, and brought the items to David. The messenger was attempting to crown David as king. It appears the messenger was hoping David would reward him for making him the king.

At this juncture, we must decide why there are two different stories about the death of Saul. It is possible that people remembered different things about the battle. Battles are stressful and may confuse witnesses

about the precise details of events. So, it may be that the author of 1 and 2 Samuel had two different accounts of the battle. However, the messenger's efforts to portray himself as a hero for killing Saul, and bringing David the symbols of kingship make it likely that he was lying to David to receive a reward. Scripture indicates David saw the messenger as an opportunist (2 Samuel 4:10).

1:11–12. David and his men tore their clothes in a traditional demonstration of grief. Their grief was for the loss of their king and his son Jonathan (who would have been the heir to the throne), and the defeat of their fellow Israelites. Again, David demonstrated loyalty to Israel, including its king and Jonathan, who were both obstacles to him becoming king.

1:13. David asked the messenger to identify himself, trying to discern the messenger's motives. The messenger identified himself as an Amalekite to David for the first time, which likely made David suspicious of the messenger since the Israelites viewed the Amalekites as deceitful.

1:14. Even if the Amalekite did not understand the significance of killing Saul, David certainly did, since he knew Saul was anointed by God and deserving of great reverence. Neither David nor the messenger had the right to kill Saul (1 Sam. 24:1–15, 26:9).

1:15–16. David executed the messenger for his crime. Again, David demonstrated his loyalty to Saul, even after his death.

Mourning for Saul and Jonathan (1:17–27)

1:17–18. David called on Judah (his tribe) to mourn Saul's death. The poetry Book of Jashar, lost to history, recorded some of David's lament. (Joshua 10:12–13 also mentions the Book of Jashar.)

1:19–20. Gath and Ashkelon were two of the five major Philistine city-states. To tell the story of Saul's death there would cause the Philistines to celebrate, mocking the passing of God's anointed king.

1:21. Saul died in Gilboa. For it to bloom with growth would mock the death of Saul.

1:22. David noted the bravery of Saul and Jonathan. They did not die for lack of courage.

1:23–25. It is easy to remember Saul’s shortcomings, especially in comparison to the successes of David. But David reminded Israel that Saul had his good qualities. Saul loved Jonathan as a good father. Saul, alongside Jonathan, had early military successes that helped bring prosperity to Israel (1 Sam. 13–14).

1:26–27. These verses showcase the most heartfelt moment in the lament. While David was loyal to Saul, he loved Jonathan; the two shared a close bond (1 Sam. 18:1). David’s lament went beyond a sense of duty, devotion, and loyalty; he expressed raw emotional grief over the loss of a beloved friend.

God’s Will for David (2:1–7)

2:1. David’s return to Judah would have significant political implications, indicating an intent on his part to become king in the wake of Saul’s death. However, David did not return to Judah without first seeking God’s counsel. He wanted to discern God’s will for his life. Thus, David’s return to Judah was the result of God’s will, not David’s ambition.

2:2–3. David returned to Judah with his two wives and his entire household, indicating he was no longer in hiding, but intended to make his stay in Judah permanent.

2:4a. David did not declare himself king; the people of Judah, who recognized God was with David, appointed him. The process of anointing included pouring sweet-smelling oil over his head.

2:4b–7. While the southern tribe of Judah may have been loyal to David, that was not necessarily true of the northern tribes. David sought to show

them favor and further demonstrate his loyalty to Saul by rewarding those who had buried Saul. David declared that he was king over Judah, but not all of Israel (2:7). David acted deliberately according to God's instructions, not wanting to upset anyone who was loyal to Saul and his remaining son Ishbosheth (also called Ishbaal), who would briefly be set up as the king of the northern tribes by Abner, Saul's general (2:8–11).

Focusing on the Meaning

“My boss is a jerk!”

“My neighbor is rude!”

“Politicians can't be trusted!”

These are a few examples of angry moments many have experienced. Anger is a healthy emotion. However, sometimes anger devolves into hatred, and we treat people as enemies. We may also become someone else's enemy, as David did with Saul. Having an enemy is difficult. Often, we vilify enemies so we can dismiss them as worthless people undeserving of love.

By following God's will, David became Saul's enemy. Surely there were times when David was frustrated with how Saul treated him. However, David never stopped seeing the value of Saul's life; he was one of God's precious creatures. God had anointed Saul. If God loved him, then David understood that he was to love him as well.

When news of Saul's death reached David, it was tempting for him to feel excited. He would no longer have to hide as an outlaw. He could go home and begin to fulfill God's will for his life by becoming king. When bad things happen to our enemies, it is easy for us to rejoice and say the individual deserved it. However, David's relationship with Saul teaches us that our enemies are humans with good qualities. We need to love our enemies as Jesus taught us (Matthew 5:44). Saul, for all his faults, could not have been utterly evil if he obeyed God at times and raised someone like Jonathan. How can you find the good qualities in your enemies and see them as fellow creatures of God?

Teaching Plans

DISCOVERY PLAN

Connect with Life

1. Write the word *Bittersweet* on a markerboard before class begins. As members arrive, distribute cups of lemonade. Then say, *Lemonade is bittersweet. Without sugar, it is too bitter. Without lemon, it is too sweet. Many life experiences are bittersweet.*
2. Ask participants to share stories and real-life examples of bittersweet moments in their lives. Examples might include:
 - Successful surgery but limited physical activity following
 - A wedding without the presence of a recently deceased family member
 - Coming in first place in a marathon but beating a friend who desperately wanted to win
 - Sending a child to the mission field for an extended time
 - Adopting a child whose parents are no longer able to care for him or her
3. Say, *Today we will see how David, at a bittersweet and pivotal time in his life, valued people, even his enemies.*

Guide Bible Study

4. Direct members to 1 Samuel to scan chapter headings to get a brief overview of the background for 2 Samuel. Enlist a member to record responses on a markerboard as class members suggest noteworthy events that shaped the backdrop for today's study.
5. Distribute copies of the focal passage (2 Samuel 1; 2:1–7) from *The Message* interpretation. (A copy of this passage is available in Teaching Resource Items for this study at www.baptistwaypress.org). Invite several class members to read portions of the passage aloud.

6. Form three study groups within the class. Give groups ten to fifteen minutes to review their assigned passages and prepare several significant details from the verses to share with the class. Provide commentaries and study materials for the groups.
- Group 1—The Story (2 Samuel 1:1–16, 1 Samuel 31)
 - Group 2—The Emotion (2 Samuel 1:17–27)
 - Group 3—The Future (2 Samuel 2:1–7)

Or, ask the groups to come up with several essential questions from their passage to present to the entire class. For example, Group 1 might ask, *How does the story of the Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1 differ from the account in 1 Samuel 31?* Group 2 might ask, *How did David express the depth of his relationship and friendship with Jonathan?* Be prepared to help the class to respond to the questions presented.

7. Share the following formula for dealing with bittersweet moments in life. Encourage class members to make additions or changes based on today's Scripture passage and their life experiences.
- Get the story.
 - Ask for clarification.
 - Mourn appropriately.
 - Assure justice is served.
 - Walk through the grief process.
 - Look to the future.
 - Faithfully serve as God calls.
 - Show mercy and kindness to all people.

Encourage Application

8. Call attention to David's genuine grief expressed in this passage. Ask, *Does David's grief for Saul make sense in light of today's culture? Why or why not?*
9. Present the following case study for discussion. (A copy of this case study is available in Teaching Resource Items for this study at www.baptistwaypress.org). *You have a boss who has mistreated you for the past several years. You have just received word that your boss had an accident that makes it impossible for her to return to work. When her retirement*

is announced, you will move into her position. What will you say to other coworkers about your former boss? How difficult is it to focus on the value of your former boss when she has continually devalued you and your work?

10. Ask, *How does the Scripture passage help you understand the inherent value of all people?*
11. Say, *Like David, we sometimes find ourselves living between grief and God's blessing, even in the same circumstance.*
12. Close by praying for class members to be sensitive to the worth of all people, even in the challenging situations and complications they face in the coming week.

DISCUSSION PLAN

Connect with Life

1. As class begins, share a bittersweet moment in your personal life. Perhaps it was the loss of a loved one, just as David experienced with the loss of Jonathan and Saul. Say, *It is soothing to the soul to know that God prepares a place in heaven for all eternity for those who trust him as Savior and Lord but saying goodbye to them for a while is bittersweet.*
2. Say, *Today's study of David will challenge believers to understand the inherent worth of all people, even our enemies.*

Guide Bible Study

3. Suggest the following outline for today's study:
 - David Received Tragic News (1:1–16)
 - David Released His Sorrow (1:17–27)
 - David Returned to Judah (2:1–7)
4. Enlist a class member to present a brief overview of the events leading up to the opening of 2 Samuel. Be sure to highlight the on-again and off-again relationship between Saul and David, noting that David never changed his desire to honor King Saul in every way possible.

5. Recruit a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 1:1–16 aloud. Then, ask the class to consider the following questions:
 - *Do you think the traveler's story was truthful? Why or why not?*
 - *What was the significance of the traveler's appearance?*
 - *How did the traveler's account of Saul's death differ from the account in 1 Samuel 31?*
 - *Did David's and his men's response to Saul's death surprise you? Why or why not?*
 - *Why did David take the traveler's life after interviewing him again? Do you agree with David's actions?*
 - *What punishment is justified for someone who interferes with the Lord's anointed?*
6. Point out that it would seem reasonable for David to grieve the death of his best friend, Jonathan. But it would be highly unlikely, at least humanly speaking, for David to mourn the death of Saul, especially after the many ways that Saul was cruel to David. Ask, *What was the source of David's strength to honor Saul after his death?*
7. Read 2 Samuel 1:17–27 aloud. Ask class members to listen for words and phrases that David used to describe the worth of Saul and Jonathan. Ask a volunteer to write responses on a markerboard. Reread the verses, this time asking listeners to identify words and phrases that describe the depth of David's despair. Invite a member or two to summarize these phrases in a sentence.
8. Encourage a volunteer to read 2:1–7 aloud. Present a brief mini-lecture on these verses, paying particular attention to the following:
 - David inquired of God specifically and was careful to do what God commanded.
 - David was anointed.
 - David blessed those who cared for Saul's body.

Encourage Application

9. Ask, *Have you received bad news during a good time in your life? Or good news during a tough time in your life? Does life seem to bring bittersweet moments for you?* Provide time for responses.

10. Call attention to the “Questions” in the *Study Guide*. Allow time for discussion.
11. Say, *Jim Denison, founder of the Denison Forum on Truth and Culture, often says, “God redeems all He allows.”* Then ask, *How does this phrase help us understand the bittersweet experiences of life?*
12. Close by reminding participants that doing good to those who choose to do you harm is bittersweet. Call attention to the questions in the *Study Guide* sidebar “What About My Enemies?” Invite members to respond.
13. Close in prayer, asking God for the grace we need to love all people, even those who seek to do us harm.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 1-3 are from the New Revised Standard Version (1989).