

QT Questions—for 2Samuel

(Here's a short introduction to the book of 2Samuel from one of my study Bibles.)

- Sometimes it's hard to look in the mirror. Standing face-to-face with yourself, you might be shocked to see your flaws and failures and prefer to look away. You might ask, "how could God ever love me?" David, whose story begins in 1Samuel and continues in 2Samuel, could have asked that question. He knew struggle, sorrow and sin, but he also experienced God's persistent love. David was someone we can all identify with. In this book we see that no matter how great his triumphs, no matter how he failed, no matter how deep his despair, God's love was always with him.
- Look for God's hand in human events. David rose to power because God selected him. David's heroic exploits were possible because God was with him. And David's disappointments (such as his adultery and the rebellion of his son Absalom) show God's justice and mercy in response to sin.

2Sam 1 (3/16/23)

1. In 1:1-16, who is the young man taking Saul's final breath and why was that important; why do you think he came to David; why did David treat him in such a way; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 1:17-27, why didn't David want for Gath and Ashkelon to know of Saul's demise; why did David curse Mount Gilboa; what did David want God's people to do over Saul and why; how is this applicable to you?

* Rather than rejoicing over the demise of his enemy, David is lamenting. Why should he weep when his enemy is no more? That is not the behavior of many of us. This is another of David's heart that reflects more of God's heart, which I have yet to taste, which I pray I can. I know how to be thankful over the demise of my enemy, but to weep is something that I have yet to do. But to weep is what David does; this is what our holy God does over sinners, who hate Him and will not worship Him. God's heart is truly very, very, very different than what I see inside of me. Oh Lord, Your heart I pray for; may we humbly grow more like You and love more like You and weep more like You.

2Sam 2 (3/17/23)

1. In 2:1-7, what kind of city was Hebron and why return there for David; what happened at Hebron for David; what was David acknowledging about the people of Jabesh Gilead and why; what do you learn here?
2. In 2:8-32, who is Ish-Bosheth and why does he matter here; why is Abner warning Asahel; why do they stop fighting; how is this applicable to you?

* A quick thought on the trumpet call in v. 28. This civil war that just began and was raging simply stopped because Joab blew the trumpet. To hear the trumpet call, the fighting men stopped their pursuit and fought no more. Simply amazing, just incredible. They just witnessed 24 young men fight to death. They must have all thought, either I kill them or they will kill me. Their emotion, their sacrificial hearts, their adrenalin, perhaps, even their blood thirstiness, everything must have been in full rage. And, yet, to stop, as they heard the trumpet call, as God instructed them. Simply amazing. To be

able to stop what we are doing, to be able to stop what we were about to say, to be able to stop the evil we are thinking, to be able to stop the march into our sin, all because we heard the trumpet call of our God. What obedience; what grace from our God. Oh, how I pray that we would be able to stop our march to sin when we hear the trumpet call of our God.

2Sam 3 (3/18/23)

1. In 3:1-21, how many sons and wives did David have and what is the meaning of his many wives; why did Abner turn from Ish-Bosheth and what do you think of his act; who was Paltiel and what do you think of his position and action; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 3:22-39, why did Joab think so negatively of Abner and was he right to do what he did; what is the meaning of David's curse over Joab; what did David and all the people do for Abner's death; how is this applicable to you?

* David's action or lack of action towards Joab is one of the story that perplexes me. When all his men wanted to kill Saul inside the cave, David alone stood and would not let them. When many of his men would have been puzzled and even resistant in going to war against Israel with King Achish, David alone lead them and they all eventually followed. So, we know David is more than able to challenge and lead through opposition. Yet, here, in our chapter, when David clearly believes that Joab is in the wrong, strangely, David dares not rebuke him as he should. In fact, we know later, David makes his son, Solomon, take revenge on Joab. Clearly, David felt the wrong, and yet, David would not deal with it, and passes the buck to his son to take care what he himself should have. Long story short, we all have our weaknesses, and I am of the opinion that Joab (and later on, we will see his sons as well) was David's achilles heel. Rather than trusting God and submitting to God's way, I think David is over-thinking here, rationalizing too many things, counting the cost, and trying to make sense, when I believe it would have been better for him, to leave all the consequences to God, and simply obey, whatever the outcome it might bring. And you know, though we might not fully understand, we must believe that our obedience to God's will will always bring the best result for our souls. God teaches us, obedience is truly better than sacrifice, better than common sense, better than counting the cost, better than fearing what it might bring. I pray that obedience to our God is what we would do, even when we don't understanding what's going on.

2Sam 4 (3/20/23)

1. In 4:1-4, why would Ish-Bosheth and all Israel be alarmed over Abner's death; who is Mephibosheth and why is he recorded here; what do you learn here?
2. In 4:5-12, who are Rekab and Baanah and what did they do and why did they do so; in v. 8, they attribute their action to the Lord's act, how is this right or wrong; why was David so unkind to them; how is this applicable to you?

* Rekab and Baanah spoke of their action as if God had ordained it. They thought that God would be pleased as David also should. Of course, they clearly knew they were acting for their own hopeful blessing from the new king, David. But, it seems, that it

wasn't only for themselves that they acted, but they thought the king and God would also benefit from their action. These two men makes me think that we also do that a lot in our lives. What we want to do, what we think it's good for us, we also attach God's name or blessing to appear more God pleasing. When my blessing is involved, it's easy to be blinded and misuse and even abuse God's name in order to make me look even better. I am saddened that I can identify more with these two men than with David here. But, that's who I am. "Oh Father, may I not be blinded by my desire for my benefit, to even misuse your name to try to make me look better. Please, bless me to turn my eyes to Your Son, so that His way, His sacrifice to bless others, is what I delight, rather than sacrificing others for my benefit. In Jesus' name I pray."

2Sam 5 (3/21/23)

1. In 5:1-16, what did the Jebusites mean when they said that "even the blind and the lame can ward you off" to David and why think that; where was Jerusalem located and why was that significant for David's kingship; in vv. 13-16, how would David's action make God feel in light of Deut 17:17; what do you learn here?
2. In 5:17-25, as the Philistines attack Israel, what does David do and how does God lead them (same attack and yet different strategies of responses); how is this applicable to you?

* In vv. 2 and 12, we see God exalted and established David to be the king, the ruler over His people. But, this kingly exaltation was not meant for him to have his subjects serve him. Rather, his high position was granted in order for him to shepherd God's people; His kingship was given for the sake of His people. The people in our world often mistaken the high position to be a place for the lower position people to serve those above them. But, as we see here with David, and most clearly with our Lord Jesus, He did not come to be served, though He was the King of all kings, but came to serve, all the way, to even lay down His life in His service for His subjects. As we can see, the order in God's kingdom is so different than the world's order. The higher we rise, the more we can serve, just as we see our King serve the lowest subjects, the undeserving creatures, and the unlovely and unlovable people. Jesus' love and service does not hinge in our doing or deserving or loveliness, but rests completely in His humility to serve, in His loving heart to pour His compassion to us. He is the true Shepherd of our souls, who came and lives eternally for the sake of His people, for you and I. As we have been served with His amazing love and humility, may we drink from His fountain deeply and may His love and humility in us overflow unto the people around us. What a kettle we can be, with Jesus' love and humility.

2Sam 6 (3/22/23)

1. In 6:1-11, in v. 3, how did David instruct the ark of God to be brought up and why do you think that was; when the oxen stumbled and the ark of God might possibly fall to the ground, isn't it right to try to stop it by holding it, so why would God kill a person when he seemed to do what's right; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 6:12-23, in v. 13, what was the new way David instructed the ark of God to be brought and why; why would they be joyfully partying over this; why was Michal in such a foul mood; how did David respond; how is this applicable to you?

* I appreciate greatly David's celebration over the bringing of the ark of God. As he first began, albeit foolishly, he called together ALL the able young men in Israel to celebrate with him. I love this heart to call all together to celebrate our God. Of course, this ended disastrously. Usually, after such a heartfelt and wholehearted effort and failure, most people will stop trying. It does seem that David had no desire to try again at first, until he sees the house of Obed-Edom so blessed, he knew he would be the loser for it if he didn't try again. After getting over his foolish thoughts and his overly self righteous indignation over God's justice (he thinks he has the right to be angry at God, never mind it is he who has done the wrong), he humbles himself and calling everyone together again, celebrates God's presence and nearness, joyfully shouting and dancing. After a miserable failure, to work our hearts to find joy, is an incredible heart I wish I knew how to do better. This is beautiful; David's heart is beautiful, and I pray for this kind of heart in all of us. Let's pray for this heart in us, to work our hearts to find joy before the Lord.

2Sam 7 (3/23/23)

1. In 7:1-17, can you summarize what the Lord is saying in the next three sections—vv. 5-7, then vv. 8-11a, then vv. 11b-16; what do you learn about your God?
2. In 7:18-29, how does David respond to God's words of promise; what are some of God's promise you remember and how do you respond?

* In vv. 1-4, I love the flow, the sequence of responses. First, normally, during our rest, because we want a good rest, we stop noticing others, especially their needs. But, it is during his rest, David thought of the Lord's honor above his. He noticed how upside down the house situation was, between his and the Lord's. Clearly, God should be placed above his, but what he saw, he saw his house in a better place. Second, in order to rectify what he thought was wrong, he speaks with God's prophet, Nathan, to somehow receive his go-ahead, and he does. The prophet was so pleased, he doesn't even ask for reasons or details. He just encourages, go do whatever is in your mind, because it seems to be coming from a real good place. Third, God's response to bless David's heart is immediate, promising him more abundant blessing than he had imagined. It seemed as if God was just waiting for David to initiate his heart's desire for God. So, that very night David shared and moved on his thought, the Lord just opened the floodgate of His abundant blessing to pour unto David and his future family. We see that quite frequently with God. He seems to wait until we ask or act, then, immediately, we see our God responding with such goodness. So, our God is a God who knows how to wait patiently for the right timing, that is, until we ask or seek, and then, God just simply and joyfully opens His floodgate of goodness to His people. What an awesome God we worship. PTL!

2Sam 8 (3/24/23)

1. In 8:1-14, which nations did God give David victory; why destroy the chariots and horses when they could have been useful to Israel's future wars; can you examine and list the many areas in your life where the Lord led you to victory and where you are still waging war and where you are easily defeated?

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2. In 8:15-18, in v. 15, how did God bless David to lead His people; who of David's officials stand out to you and why; what do you learn here?

* Today, I want to offer a word about translation because of the potential we might misunderstand God's word. In v. 18, this chapter ends by recording that David's sons were priests. That could not be right. Clearly, David had Zadok and Abiathar as priests, who were from the line of Aaron. As some of the commentaries would correct, instead of priests, it would be chief ministers. David's sons would be serving in David's court as ministers and not as priests. Sometimes, in the translation, a word can be translated into many different ways, and a word that makes much sense in the original language would give a different meaning or understanding after the translation, and even more so, with our cultural difference.

2Sam 9 (3/25/23)

1. In 9:1-8, why was David searching for a descendant of Saul and why would this be unusual and why would it make sense; what do you notice about the way David first welcomed Mephibosheth; why would Mephibosheth say what he said; what do you learn here?
2. In 9:9-13, how does David honor Mephibosheth and why; how is he described twice in vv. 3 and 13 and why do you think that's significant; how is this applicable to you?

* In v. 12, we are told Mephibosheth had a son, Mika. Mephibosheth was five years old, when his grandfather and father, Jonathan, died (4:4). Now, Mephibosheth have a son. So, around the time when David searches for a descendant of Saul and Jonathan, many years have passed. David is now well established as the king. Many of us function under the standard, "Out of sight, out of mind." After all these years, it would be very normal for David to have forgotten completely about his talk with Jonathan (1Sam 20:15). For many of us, we have long memories of our bad experiences, and sadly, our memories of our good are usually much shorter. So, after these many years, when David searches for a descendant of Saul, not to do them harm for the many evils he received from Saul, but to show kindness is an amazing, beautiful, God like heart. I pray that all of us would also be filled with such a heart, to remember long the goodness to show more kindness. And Lord, we pray that our memories over the bad will have a short life in us, and be thrown far, far away from us, literally, out of sight, out of mind.

2Sam 10 (3/27/23)

1. In 10:1-8, what did David want to do for the new king, Hanun, and why; how did Hanun respond and why; because of his terrible response, what would be the result; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 10:9-19, how would Israel fare in this war against such a large force from the enemies and why; who regretted helping and why would such help be bad; how is this applicable to you?

* It has been said, more important than the facts of life is the interpretation of the facts. Here, we have David offering kindness with a genuine heart. But, sadly, the leaders of Ammon distrust David's good intention, and impute evil, and therefore, mistreat the men

who came to deliver goodness. They were repaying kindness with evil. What began as a wonderful gesture, ended with a full war, buying thousands of mercenaries, and suffering incredible numbers of deaths, all because of distrust and suspicion, when there should have been none. So much harm, so many deaths, all because they misinterpreted David's action. This misinterpretation of the actions and words of other people is so common in our world and in our lives, isn't it? Let's pray for much humility and discernment. Let's pray that we do not act like the Ammonites. And let's NOT stop offering kindness because of the potential of misinterpretation. Some people might say, that this war would have never happened if David never offered kindness in the first place. But that would be a wrong heart. Our God delights when His people reflect His kind heart to the undeserving. Let's NOT let a potential evil determine our steps. Rather, let our desire to reflect our Lord's wonderful heart be our greatest reason for our actions and words. Let's continue to be kind because He is kind.

2Sam 11 (3/28/23)

1. In 11:1-27, can you list and explain the many ways David sins in this chapter; which ones mirror your life or do you struggle with?
2. In 11, what is the significance of Bathsheba's purifying from her monthly uncleanness; will you list and explain Uriah's behavior; what does God say of David's actions?

* This chapter is frightening real for me, and though I can share many things, I will share one. To be where one shouldn't be, that is, to not be where we should be. There's nothing wrong resting at home, as David was. In many instances, kings are asked to not come to the front of the battle. Though perhaps not there in person, but to be with his men in his heart would be what David would probably normally would do and want. But, this time, his heart was nowhere near his men fighting for their lives. And of course, to see Uriah remain loyal to his brethren fighting, even as David was tempting and luring him to enjoy the rest, would have most likely pricked his conscience. Yet, his sin blinded him and made him dull to God's stirring. We can be so like David. God never stops to work in our hearts, especially when we are sinning, and yet, many of us, do not see or hear or feel God's moving in us, because we are blinded in our sins and disobedient to God's leading. Oh Lord, we want to repent before You. Bless us to humbly hear and desire to obey You, MORE than continue in our sinning. Oh Lord, without You, our hearts are too stubborn and resistant in our ugly ways. We need You. Bless us to want You more than anything, more than anyone, more than our sins, more than ourselves.

2Sam 12 (3/29/23)

1. In 12:1-23, why did God send Nathan to David; what were David's three responses, first to the story, second when he was accused and third for the child; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 12:24-31, what were the two names of David's new son and their meaning; what did Joab want David to do and why; how is this applicable to you?

* Here's a short explanation of v. 14 from my study Bible. If God forgave David, why did his son have to die? Sin often has a price tag, even though its eternal consequences

have been dealt with. Some suggest there are two results of sin: 1) It separates a person from God; 2) It produces negative effects in this world. In this view, forgiveness covers the first result of sin but not necessarily the second. Unfortunately for innocent people like David's infant son, the negative effects of sin are not limited to the sinner.

2Sam 13 (3/30/23)

1. In 13:1-22, in what way did Amnon imitate his father David; why would Jonadab advise Amnon the way he did; why would Amnon hate his sister more after he wronged her; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 13:23-39, in what way did Absalom imitate his father David; how long did Absalom wait to have his revenge on his brother and what does this say about Absalom; where is God when all these things were happening; how is this applicable to you?

* David's dealing with his three children in this chapter is painfully sad and evil. He is furious and weeps bitterly and mourns for them. But, like Eli, David cannot make himself discipline his children in God's way. David would not follow God's way. "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away... Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death" (Prov 22:15, 23:13-14). We are confronted with the life of sight versus faith. For David and many parents, the sight to discipline their children is too difficult for them to follow. But, if they could look beyond their pain and see by faith, they would see, by disciplining them, they were actually saving their children. But sight can blind the faith in the moment of trials and difficulties and pain. In the midst of tears and pain, may our God bless us to open our eyes of faith and see His words more real and true than our feelings, emotions, thoughts, and perspectives. May God be true and every person, every feeling, every perspective other than our God's, be a liar. May we love God's truth more and more and more than the lies we like to believe.

2Sam 14 (3/31/23)

1. In 14, what was David's heart towards Absalom; what did Joab discern about his king and what and why did Joab do what he did; what do you learn here?
2. In 14:25-33, did Absalom repent for his sin and how can you tell; what do you think about Absalom's way to get Joab's attention; how is this applicable to you?

* The Absalom we meet here saddens me. I understand his bitter and angry and vengeful heart towards his older brother and his father for not doing anything. But, he has no remorse for his own sin, only the outrage done to his sister. Surely anger is a right feeling, but so should a repentant heart for his own sin. Evil for evil is all, no room for forgiveness, no room for repentance. For sure, forgiveness is much easier in theory than in practice. That is why, if we try to forgive out of our own strength, then it is easy to be overwhelmed by the feeling of anger and vengeance. That is why, we must look to our Lord and not trust in ourselves to do what He desires. Only when our eyes are fixed on Him, can we find His mercy to not treat them as they deserve and find His grace to offer them an unmerited kindness that they don't deserve either. Mercy and grace are something we don't deserve, but our Lord graciously blesses us with His mercy and grace. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord.

2Sam 15 (4/1/23)

1. In 15:1-12, how long did it take for Absalom to exact revenge on his brother and now how long did it take against his father; how did he steal the hearts of the people; what does that say about him; what do you learn?
2. In 15:13-37, why does David not stay and fight and instead flee; who goes with him and why; who does David ask to stay behind and why; what do you learn about our God in this chapter; how is this applicable to you?

* In v. 23, we are told the whole countryside wept aloud as their King passed by. So, while Jerusalem was about to be taken over by Absalom's followers, the whole countryside wept for and with David. It is easy to mistaken the city dwellers to represent all people, but in many instances, they do not. The countryside people's hearts were not stolen by the sweet talk and seemingly humble behavior of the young Prince. They were not mesmerized by his handsome good look. What the people see is their King is not willing to shed blood of the people for the sake to keep his position. In fact, they see that the King is willing to return the ark back to the enemy's hand, as a humble submission before their all wise God to decide what's right for His kingdom. In the midst of his tears, David's humility before God humbles us greatly. To seek His kingdom and righteousness before his own well being, that's the kind of heart that pleases our Heavenly Father's heart. Oh Lord, we pray for our hearts to humbly seek Your kingdom and righteousness first, both during the days of joy and also during our days of tears.

2Sam 16 (4/3/23)

1. In 16:1-14, how and why does Ziba show kindness to David; how and why does Shimei curse David; why does David accept his curses instead of retaliating; what do you learn?
2. In 16:15-23, despite his suspicion, why does Absalom accept Hushai's reasoning; what was Ahithophel's advice and what would it accomplish and how did it fulfill Nathan's prophecy (12:11-12); how is this applicable to you?

* Why would Ahithophel betray his king and friend David? God's word does not explain to us why, so we can only make some educated guesses. Let me share two. One explanation is that he is an opportunist. The old is gone and the new king is in town, so he would rather enjoy the spoil of success more than suffer loss with loyalty. If success is our closest friend, then loyalty is valid only if it keeps us closest to our friend. And now, since loyalty would pull him further away from success, he drops loyalty and follows success wherever it leads him, and that was with the new young king, Absalom. Another explanation is the connection between Ahithophel and Uriah. In 2Sam 23:34, we are told that Ahithophel is said to be the father of Eliam. And from 2Sam 11:3, we read that Eliam is the father of Bathsheba. If this Ahithophel and Eliam are the same people we assume, then, it means that Ahithophel is Bathsheba's grandfather. That means, David destroyed his granddaughter's family, by killing her husband and by taking her to be another of David's wives. How angry would you be, if your king and friend did that to your granddaughter's family? As understandable his anger would be, to repay evil with evil would also be sinful and wrong. May I remind us, only our God truly

knows how to repay evil with kindness, which is why, as His people, we look to Him and humbly desire to do as He did, that is, to also repay the evil of others done to us with the kindness we have first received from our God.

2Sam 17 (4/4/23)

1. In 17:1-14, what was the point of Ahithophel's advice; what was Hushai's counterpoint; why did one succeed over the other; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 17:15-29, how did Ahimaaz and Jonathan succeed in their endeavor; why did Ahithophel hang himself; how and who came out to help David in Mahanaim; how is this applicable to you?

* In 16:23, it reads, "Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God." Wow, this is of the highest praise and respect for any counselor. Knowing how wise his counsel was, David prayed against him, "So David prayed, 'Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness'" (15:31). So, despite the great counsel Ahithophel gave to Absalom, to quickly attack David while they are weak, is rejected for another counsel meant to give David time to escape. Great counsel, yet when it was rejected, it came to nothing. So, like Judas, Ahithophel hangs himself, for the rejection and probably because he could foresee David's triumph. Such a sad end to a person given such an amazing gift, "like that of one who inquires of God." Many things should be said, but I will share one final brief thought. The gift that spoke like God, should have pointed to God as the Giver of all good things, but the gift must have taken hold of him, thinking that he was like God, which made his rejection unbearable. When we want to be the gift, instead of pointing to the Giver, then we too will be confused in our identity and our place.

2Sam 18 (4/5/23)

1. In 18:1-18, what was David's instruction to his commanders before their battle and why; how did Absalom get caught; who killed Absalom and why; what do you learn here?
2. In 18:19-33, what is Ahimaaz's desire and why; why does Joab not desire to send him and instead send a Cushite and why; what is David's response to the news and why; how is this applicable to you?

* In v. 18 we are told that Absalom had no sons, but in 14:27, we are told he had three sons. What's going on here? The simplest answer is that his three sons had deceased by this time, which is why, Absalom says he has no son. Life is like that, isn't it? What was true then, is no longer true now. Life has changes. So, as we live our lives, let's always understand the context before we simply assume it's wrong because it is not consistent with what was said or done before or as we remember or as we believed. Only our Lord will always be faithfully consistent and true at all times. The rest of us will not be. Let's understand that about us and about others and about our God.

2Sam 19 (4/6/23)

1. In 19:1-8, why was David weeping and why do you think he did; how does Joab describe the king's behavior; how did David respond to Joab's rebuke?

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2. In 19:9-43, who are the three men who stood before David and why; why would the men of Judah and Israel be at odds; what do you learn?

* The mourning of a father for his wayward son is incredible to me. Absalom betrayed his father, killed the crown prince, treasonously claimed his father's throne while David was still alive, undermined his father's authority, conspired against the king, usurped the throne, had sex with his father's concubines, and attempted to kill his father. Despite all of this, David mourns the death of his son, Absalom. The father's love for his son seems like there's no depth of sorrow he would endure. Wow, simply amazing. But to pause and think, that I, we, are more rebellious and evil than Absalom to our Father, and to know our Father's heart is truly wider, deeper, higher and much, much greater than David, it's amazing. No wonder, our Father can invite us to enter into His throne room with confidence, because, despite our many ugly sins, His heart of love for His children is much greater and wider and deeper than our sins. His love is truly amazing and truly much bigger than we can imagine.

2Sam 20 (4/7/23)

1. In 20:1-22, what was Sheba's claim and why did it make sense to many in Israel; what did Joab do to Amasa and why; how did the battle end; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 20:23-26, in the list of David's officials, can you point out what you notice and why; what do you learn?

* Verse 3 speaks about the ten concubines David left behind before his escape from Absalom. I thought about how the lives of these women were ruined because of David. They were chosen by the king to be his concubine, robbing them of a normal life and marriage like the girls they grew up with. Because of David's decision to leave them behind, these ten women were raped by Absalom. Now, after David's return to his throne, they are treated as unwanted, unwilling to accept them in their places as before, as the king would not have any sexual relations with them anymore. They were kept in confinement until their death, living as widows, though their "supposed" husband was still alive, in David. His lust for women made David marry more than one wife, and as if the several wives were not enough, he ruined these ten women by forcing them to be his concubines. Like father like son, Solomon's lust for women is insatiable. Two blessed men of God, and yet, two ugly sinners, who gave in to their sins so very easily. And oh, how very similar we are with them. There are areas in our lives we truly live for God's glory, but let's be humbly aware, there are other areas in our lives, where we have surrendered ourselves to our sins. That is why, these wonderful people cannot be our imitation. Only He who is perfect, who has never sinned, can be and must be our only focus, our only imitation, and our only hope. It is to Jesus, who has never sinned though tempted in every way, is the only One to whom we run to and find His grace to cleanse us and to transform us. There is no other name than Jesus, where we find our salvation and our deliverance. Thank You Jesus for coming for sinners like us, for a sinner like me.

2Sam 21 (4/8/23)

1. In 21:1-14, what Saul did to the Gibeonites are not recorded in God's word but we know who they are (Josh 9)—according to v. 1, what did Saul tried to do and how was that related to the famine David is experiencing; what was the solution to the problem; how did God respond after all these things?
2. In 21:15-22, what almost happened to David in the battlefield and what was the result; who are the four mighty men of Israel who struck down the four mighty men of the Philistines; what do you learn?

* The Gibeonites' problem is complex (Josh 9). It was they who first deceived God's people. And Saul seemed to have taken upon himself to try to right the wrong that Joshua and the leaders previously made. But, because of the oath it was made before God, the Israelites had to accept them, which Saul would not. Now, because of Saul's action against them, there was a famine for three successive years during David's days. Interesting, that the famine was not during Saul's days, as he was the culprit to this problem. And the solution they arrive to this problem was by putting to death 7 of Saul's male descendants. Not really sure how to understand this. What God approves and doesn't, we are not told. However, in the end, in v. 14, we are told, "After (all) that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land," removing the famine. As I said, I am not really sure how to understand this passage. But, of course, this is not the only passage I don't understand in God's word. There are many, which only reminds me, how little I know, and how much greater and higher and mysterious God's word is to humans, especially to me (Is 55:8-9; Deut 29:29).

2Sam 22 (4/10/23)

1. In 22:1-51, which descriptions of God from David ministers to you most as you reflect on his life; which of God's descriptions can you best relate and why; will you describe God with words that David did not use and yet share how He delivers you?
2. In vv. 10 & 17, what do you see God doing and can you connect this to what Jesus did for you; in vv. 34 & 37, how are these pictures similar and different and how is this applicable to you?

* In vv. 21-27, if we simply take these words at face value, then it sure sounds as if David was always faithful and blameless, which is why God is rewarding him. So, God's blessing sounds like a reward for his good deeds. But, we know that is not true, neither for God or for David. God does not simply reward according to our good deeds, and David was not blameless. So, whenever we read God's word (or hear other people for that matter), we must remember the context. Let me give you a short explanation that my study Bible gave. While these statements may give the impression of self-righteous boasting and a meritorious basis for divine favor, they should be understood in their context as: 1) David's desire to please the Lord in his service as the Lord's anointed; 2) his recognition that the Lord rewards those who faithfully seek to serve Him. So, let's remember, yes, God delights in our faithful service. And the majesty of our God is, that as surely as He delights to reward His faithful servants, He also rewards the undeserving, for God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8).

2Sam 23 (4/11/23)

1. In 23:1-7, in vv. 2-4, how does God desire for the leaders of His people to lead; what is he like when he follows God's way; how is the evil men described; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 23:8-39, of the list of David's mighty men, whose names stand out to you and why; why wouldn't David drink the water brought to him by the three mighty men and what did that mean; how is this applicable to you?

* This chapter takes the time to list the mighty men that served with David. But, interestingly, the last name in this list is Uriah the Hittite. As much as we want to celebrate God's mighty deeds through these special men, we must pause here to remember, not only of God's mighty deeds through these men, but also remember, the ugly deed of the King of God's people, the adultery he committed against the wife of one of his own men, who would end up paying for his life, because his king wanted to cover up the adultery he had with the wife of one of his own men. Indeed, God's deeds are great through His people, but men's deeds can be ugly because of our sinfulness. Not the king, but the King of all kings is the only one who can Shepherd His people, and lead every single one of His sheep unto the green pastures. Only He is perfect, and only He alone can lead us without ever sinning against us.

2Sam 24 (4/12/23)

1. In 24:1-17, what's wrong for David to want to enroll the fighting men; why was David conscience stricken after the counting; how did God respond to David's action; how did David respond to God's action?
2. In 24:18-25, what did God want David to do after he responded to God's action; why would this place become even more significant (2Chron 3:1); how did David respond to Araunah's offer and why; how is this applicable to you?

* In 24:1, we are told that God incited David to act this way. Does that mean, that God moved David to sin? Does God cause people to sin? In 1Chronicles 21, we have the parallel account of this story, and there, we are told that it was Satan who rose up against Israel and incited David to take the census. In James 1:13-14, God says, "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." The Scripture teaching is, God does not make any person sin. So, returning to our verse, it is not God who caused David to sin. However, God allowed David to exercise his free will, and when tempted, he was dragged away by his own evil desire and succumbed to it. Because of God's sovereignty, we can clearly say God ultimately decides, for without His allowing nothing can happen. But, our God also gave and allows our free will, and it is our decision to obey God or follow our sinful desires. What is remarkable about our God is, that despite our sins, even through our sins, our God can still accomplish His good will. So, while we are sinning in disobedience to our God, God still accomplishes through our foolishness His glory, which also includes our good. That's mysteriously good, isn't it? God is mysteriously good beyond our comprehension, beyond our foolish deeds.