

## Week 31: *David's Advice to Solomon*

### Hook



**Main Point:** A godly person trusts and follows the Lord in all things.

***“With the 2<sup>nd</sup> pick in the 1971 NFL draft, the New Orleans Saints select, Archie Manning, Quarterback from Ole Miss.”***

This moment in 1971 would have been the most special and significant moment in Archie Manning’s life up to that point. After being a college phenom, Archie Manning was selected by a reeling New Orleans Saints team that was in dire need of good quarterback play; however, Archie would only go on to lead the team to one winning season in his 10 that he played for the Saints. Archie’s impact would go beyond his playing career and into his role as father. Archie’s two sons, Peyton and Eli, both set the college football world ablaze, and both had much greater success in the league than their father, winning two Super Bowls each. In fact, Peyton is in the discussion for the best to ever play the game. But would he have gotten there without the love and influence of his father? Archie’s legacy was much larger than simply the genetics passed down to his boys. The thing that truly drove his boys to be successful was his influence.

Today, we’ll be studying one of the most important father-son duos in all of Scripture by studying the last words of David to Solomon. David’s reign over Israel was coming to an end, and Solomon was about to begin his. Even though David’s life was very up and down, how will his last words turn out to Solomon?

**Q: How have your own father’s words impacted you?**

**Q: How can you be sure to measure your words when speaking to your own children or those who look up to you?**

**RECAP:** We have now reached the end of David's life, which had been a roller coaster of ups and downs. He started as a humble but brave shepherd boy. A mighty warrior, not because of his own strength but because he trusted in the Lord. Then he became Saul's armorbearer, the only musician who could soothe his spirit, his son's best friend, and his daughter's husband. Then suddenly David became a threat to Saul, which sent him on the run for over a decade. Finally, we saw David take over the throne God had promised him decades before. He ruled successfully until his grave sins of adultery and murder. He confessed, repented, and returned to the Lord. But his sin rippled through his family, and his children's sins created a huge mess. But through it all, we saw a man who loved God with his whole heart. He wasn't perfect, but when he did mess up, he turned to God. When he didn't know what to do, he turned to God. He worshipped God alone and trusted in Him alone. This is the example David gave to us and the hope he gave to us, too. That we can follow Jesus. We can be a man or woman after God's own heart. We don't have to be perfect; we just have to trust in Him and follow Him.

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**Book** (Note: 1 Chronicles 22:6–16; 28:9–10; 20–21; 29:26–30 are parallels.)

**Main Point:** A godly person trusts and follows the Lord in all things.

**1 Kings 2:1–4 and Deuteronomy 31:7–8; Joshua 1:7–8 and 2 Samuel 7:12–16 [Read]**

**Talking Point 1:** If you courageously follow the Lord, you will have true success.

**Q: How do we find success in this life? How does God define success?**

**Q: How do David's words here compare to God's covenant in 2 Samuel 7?**

This was the very end of David's life, his final words to Solomon before he passed away. Solomon was not only his son but also his successor to the throne, so his advice was not only general life advice, it was advice about how to be successful as the king of God's people. David's words sound very similar to what Moses said to Joshua when he passed the mantle of leadership on to him and spoke of God's law regarding kings. We looked at God's design for a king at the very beginning of our study, using it to evaluate both Saul and David's reigns and character. God said a king of Israel shall meditate on the law night and day so he will fear the Lord by keeping it (Deuteronomy 17:19). David charged Solomon with the same thing – to walk in God's ways and keep His law. This is how he would have success. God's words to Joshua were similar – the way to have success wherever he went was to be careful to follow the law in every way (Joshua 1:7), repeating what God told Moses in the Law itself (Deuteronomy 29:9).

David used language similar to the words both God and Moses spoke to Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:7–8; Joshua 1:6–8). Moses told Joshua to be strong and courageous and follow God. David told Solomon to be strong and “show yourself a man” (1 Kings 2:2) or more literally, “become” a man.<sup>1</sup> Solomon was inexperienced when he became king (3:7). David was telling him that, since this huge responsibility now lay at his feet, it was time to grow up. But he didn't just say, “Grow up, son!” He told him *how* to become a man, that the way to maturity is to follow the Lord with strength and courage.

The word for “be strong” here can mean “strong” or “firm,” the same directive Paul gave when he talked about putting on the armor of God to fight against the forces of wickedness in the world: “stand firm” (Ephesians 6:14). Following the Lord is a daily battle. The Enemy desperately tries to pull us away from God. It takes strength and resolve to stay on the narrow path and not turn aside to the right or the left (Joshua 1:7). This is true for all of us, but even more so for leaders. As king, Solomon would face incredible temptation to turn away from the Lord. David knew this from experience. But he also knew from experience that the only path to success was to follow the Lord. This wasn't just some platitude for David. He experienced this as truth in his life. When he

followed God and trusted in Him, things went well for him and for Israel. When he didn't follow God and trust in Him, things fell apart.

When we compare David's words here about the covenant God made with him to the actual words of God's covenant in 2 Samuel 7, they seem to conflict until we consider the dual meaning of God's covenant, that it refers both to the immediate reign of Solomon as well as the eternal reign of Jesus. Here David told Solomon that his dynasty would continue on the throne *only if* his sons paid close attention to walking with God in faithfulness with all their heart and soul (1 Kings 2:4). But in Samuel, the promise seems unconditional – "your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). Those things seem to conflict, but as we read the rest of the story of Scripture, we see that both are true at the same time. David's dynasty continued forever through Jesus, but in the book of Kings, his sons would lose the throne because of their lack of faithfulness.<sup>2</sup>

In the rest of the book of Kings, starting with Solomon himself, the sons of David did not pay close attention to walking with God, and as a result, the kingdom was eventually taken from them, and they were sent into exile. Each of these kings was evaluated by whether they followed Yahweh fully, with their whole hearts, like their father, David (1 Kings 11:6; 14:8; 15:3; 15:11; et. al.). David's words to Solomon thus foreshadowed what would happen in the rest of Kings. But the failure of the sons of David to follow the Lord with their whole hearts only points ahead to the need for Jesus, a son of David who would follow God completely, even more than David – perfectly.<sup>3</sup> Following Jesus is the key to maturity, the key to success. Maybe not the kind of "success" the world pushes, but true success in the Lord's eyes.

**Q: In what ways is it hard for you to follow Jesus? What kinds of things tend to pull you off the path of following Him?**

**Q: How can we get more of God's strength to stand firm?**

**Q: How have you experienced success from following God's ways instead of the ways of the world? Describe what that kind of success looks like.**

**1 Kings 2:5–9 and Psalm 109 [Read]**

**Talking Point 2:** A godly leader executes justice, both reward and punishment.

**Q: What did David tell Solomon to do? How does that make you feel?**

**Q: Why did David pray a psalm of curse against his enemies? How do these passages relate to all the times he said to leave vengeance to the Lord?**

This section may be difficult for us to read as part of David's parting words, and it may seem inconsistent with the character of the man who said over and over that he was leaving vengeance to the Lord. It also seems strange that David would tell Solomon to

exact vengeance on the people who had wronged him instead of doing it himself during his own reign. Add to all that the words of “imprecatory psalms” such as Psalm 109, where the author prayed for curse, destruction and God’s judgment and wrath on his enemies. How could this all be in the same Bible where Jesus told us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us?

The imprecatory psalms are the psalmist’s asking the Lord to exact punishment on our enemies. It still feels hard to reconcile with Jesus’ commands to pray for our enemies, but it was David leaving vengeance to the Lord rather than exacting it himself. The imprecatory psalms, when prayed with the right heart, are not about getting vengeance for the ways we were wronged. They are pleas for God’s justice, for God to make things right.<sup>4</sup> It would be like pleading with the Lord for the person who attacked a loved one to be sent to prison, so your loved one would receive justice through their attacker’s receiving a just punishment. And yet, Jesus would tell us to also pray for that person’s repentance, salvation and healing change. God’s goal in discipline is to lead us to repentance. This is the difference between discipline and punishment. Punishment is about retribution, but discipline seeks to enact change (Proverbs 3:11–12; Hebrews 12:7–11).

We saw this amazing kind of heart in some of the families of the victims of the shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015. “We have no room for hate. We have to forgive. I pray God on your soul. And I also thank God that I won’t be around when your judgment day comes with him.” They didn’t ask that his earthly punishment be taken away, but they forgave him, prayed for him, and committed to love him.<sup>5</sup>

When we look at how David talked about this, we see that the reason David left it to Solomon rather than doing it himself was the same – to leave it to the Lord, to be sure it was not about personal retribution but about executing justice. David told Solomon not to let Joab or Shimei go down to Sheol in peace, but he also kept saying that Solomon should act *according to his wisdom*, which was a supernatural wisdom *from the Lord* (1 Kings 3:12). At the same time, David commanded Solomon to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai. These two things, in the context of the charge to walk in God’s ways, highlight God as both a God of justice and of lovingkindness. The text even places the kindness to the Barzillai’s sons between the justice to Joab and the justice to Shimei, reminding us that although God must address sin, He is also a God of mercy. Justice and mercy are not contradictory but are two sides of the same coin.

As believers, we pray for justice, but we also pray for mercy, grace and forgiveness. Of course we want to see victims receive justice, but we also have to have a heart for the oppressor, to want to see them saved and changed. Just as Christ died for us while we were still His enemies (Romans 5:10). This is radical Christlike love.

**Q: How has receiving discipline led to repentance in your life?**

**Q: Reflect on those who have truly wronged you. Can you pray for them the way the victims in Charleston did? How can you balance that with praying for justice?**

**Q: In what situations is God calling you to leave vengeance to Him? How is He leading you to pray for your enemies? How is He calling you to pray for justice?**

**1 Kings 1:10–12 and Acts 13:26–41 [Read]**

**Talking Point 3:** The life of David points us ahead to Jesus.

**Q: What other things in Scripture happened in “40 years”?**

**Q: How would you summarize David’s life and reign?**

In Scripture, 40 years is considered a generation. The exodus generation wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until that whole first generation died out (Numbers 14:20–30). Saul, David and Solomon each reigned for 40 years, one generation each (1 Kings 11:42; Acts 13:21). The number 40 appears almost a hundred times in Scripture; here are just a few. Moses, Elijah and Jesus each fasted in the wilderness for 40 days (Deuteronomy 9:9; 1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2). It rained for 40 days and nights while Noah was in the ark (Genesis 7:4). The spies went to the promised land for 40 days (Numbers 13:25). Ezekiel laid on his side for 40 days to represent the 40 years Judah dishonored God (Ezekiel 4:6). God gave Nineveh 40 days to repent (Jonah 3:4). Goliath mocked Israel for 40 days before David stepped forward to fight him (1 Samuel 17:16). Moses’s life was split into three 40 -year periods: in Egypt, in Midian, in the exodus.

David reigned for 40 years, just as Saul. He was a man after God’s own heart, and his reign was different than Saul’s, but in the end, he died and was buried, just as Saul. He served God’s purpose in his generation but then went “the way of all the earth” (1 Kings 2:2). He died, just as every human being before him and everyone after him, with a few exceptions. He was human, flawed and mortal, just as all of us. But the One his life points ahead to overcame death (Acts 13:37). David was a shepherd who became a king, and Jesus is our good Shepherd and Eternal King. David was a man after God’s own heart. But his life also points ahead to our need for Christ. His imperfections point ahead to Christ’s perfection. His sin, confession and repentance point ahead to Christ’s triumph over sin. His sons’ unfaithfulness points ahead to Christ’s faithfulness as the son of David. His death and burial point ahead to Christ, who would overcome death. The text tells us that when David was buried, Solomon’s kingdom was “firmly established,” using the language of God’s covenant promise about Christ – “your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). David’s life ended with an expectant hope that there is a greater one to come.<sup>6</sup>

**Q: How does your life point to the goodness and grace of Jesus?**

**Q: What has God shown you about what it means to be “after His own heart”?**

## **Week 31: David's Advice to Solomon**

### **Took**

**Main Point: A godly person trusts and follows the Lord in all things.**

It takes strength and courage to follow God when everyone and everything are pulling at you from all different directions. Paul said it's a daily spiritual battle and the Enemy is constantly attacking us, trying to knock us off track (Ephesians 6:10–18). But David's advice to his son was the same as that given by Moses and Paul – stand firm. Not on your own strength but on the Lord. Just as David relied on God's strength to fight Goliath, so we can stand firm in His strength to continue to follow Him in all that we do.

**Q: What are the dangers of operating in your own strength and wisdom?**

**Q: In what ways have you benefited from relying on God for daily strength?**

### **CHALLENGES**

**THINK:** In what ways have you veered off the path of following Jesus? What things have pulled you away? How can you find the strength to stand firm and stay the course no matter what life throws at you? When you find that you have fallen off the path, what should you do to get back on it? How is this all connected to the power and the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? How can you truly be a person after God's own heart?

**PRAY** for God to give you the strength to “be strong and courageous” and to “grow up” into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Pray for His wisdom, His love and His strength. Pray for the spiritual maturity to hear His voice and follow His ways.

**ACT:** Share what you have learned in this study of David's life with someone else. It could be your children, a friend, a parent, a coworker, a spouse, anyone. Reflect on all we have discussed about the life of David and what it means to be a person after God's own heart, and then share that with someone you love.

**NEXT TIME in *The Life of David*:** Starting next week, we will begin the closing segment of our study of David by doing just what the end of David's story does, looking ahead to Jesus. We will explore the idea of Jesus as the One who fulfilled the four offices we see in Samuel: prophet, priest, king and judge. We will see how those who filled these roles in the Old Testament pointed ahead to the fact that only Jesus can execute each of these roles perfectly. And He does *all* of them!

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> John Woodhouse, *1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World, Preaching the Word Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> John N. Day, "The Imprecatory Psalms and Christian Ethics," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (Apr-Jun 2002): 166–186.

<sup>5</sup> Scott Pelley, "Family Members to Alleged Charleston Gunman: 'I forgive you'" CBS Evening News, June 19, 2015 - [Family members to alleged Charleston gunman: "I forgive you" - CBS News](#)

<sup>6</sup> John Woodhouse, *1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World, Preaching the Word Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).