



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

## 2 Samuel

### Lesson 10: 2 Samuel 15-16

Do you know someone who is wise? Someone you would go to with a complex problem or issue? Why do you consider that person wise? We all have people in our lives that we consult because of their proven knowledge and experience. However, we must understand that even the wisest of advice cannot counteract God's sovereign plan. We can have no success apart from Him. In this passage we see two men at war, one on the verge of losing his kingdom and one with every advantage to seize it. One will seek to understand God's will in the matter while one attempts to control it through worldly wisdom. I bet you can guess who wins.

**Read 2 Samuel 15:13-18**

**Why did David leave Jerusalem?**

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**Who came with David and who stayed behind?**

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David, God's chosen king, had lost the support of his citizens except for a faithful few. To avoid the massacre of the citizens of Jerusalem at the hands of Absalom, he gathered his supporters and left the city open for occupation. The only people close to

David who stayed behind were 10 of his concubines, or secondary wives, who tended to the palace. Jerusalem's citizens remained in their homes as their king left in rejection and shame.

**Read 2 Samuel 7:12. What was God's promise to David concerning his reign as king?**

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**Read 2 Samuel 12:11-12. What was God's promised punishment for David's sin with Bathsheba?**

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This was a critical moment in David's life. God had promised David that his descendent would reign after his death. Yet God did not guarantee David a long life. David knew that God's promise to bring calamity on his house had not yet been fulfilled. As David fled, we will see how his remarks say much about the state of his mind and how he understood God's promises to him.

**Read 2 Samuel 15:19-22**



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**Who is the first person to pledge their loyalty to David? Considering this person's nationality, why is his loyalty so meaningful?**

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At some point, most likely when David lived amongst the Philistines, a group of 600 fighting men from the Philistine city of Gath pledged loyalty to David and served as his bodyguards. It is particularly interesting to me that while the native Israelites had switched loyalties to Absalom, a group of Gentiles from an enemy nation maintained their allegiance to the king even though they had no worldly gain in doing so. David's indication that "you only came yesterday" may be an idiomatic expression that simply means that they had not been there long enough to warrant such an act of loyalty. Yet, Ittai is willing to lay down his life for the rejected king.

**Think about it: Name some other gentiles in the Bible who exhibited great faith.**

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**Read 2 Samuel 15:23-29**

**What did Abiathar do as the people left the city?**

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**Describe David's attitude toward God's will as expressed in this passage?**

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**Who returned to Jerusalem at David's command? Why were they to stay in Jerusalem?**

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David's decisions in this passage reflect a well-developed understanding of the source of his kingly authority. He had been granted the right to rule by God himself, a right that God could revoke at the time of His choosing. Knowing that God proclaimed the circumstances he faced as punishment for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:11), David accepted that God may allow his son to rule in his place. With these thoughts in mind, David did not allow the Ark, the symbol of God's presence with His people, to leave Jerusalem with him. He accepted God's power to decide who would rule Israel. David continued to entreat God after the Ark returned to Jerusalem. He knew that through prayer, God would hear him no matter where he went.

**Read 2 Samuel 15:30 and Psalm 3.**

**What did David do as he climbed the Mount of Olives?**

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**According to Psalm 3, what did David ask of God as he fled Jerusalem?**

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While David lamented and mourned as a he fled Jerusalem, he still expressed hope that God would remain his “shield” and “sustainer.” David did not flee in fear but trusted that God’s hand was in the matter.

**Read 2 Samuel 15:31-37**

**How are David’s prayers answered in the form of Hushai the Arkite?**

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In the midst of the catastrophe, David still sought God’s intervention and God was still listening to His king. Hushai the Arkite, one of David’s advisors, arrived to promise loyalty to the king, just after David asked for God to distort the usually wise counsel of Ahitophel. Hushai agreed to act as a sort of counter-offensive to the wisdom of Ahitophel and as a go between with the priests to keep David apprised of Absalom’s plans and military movements. Despite David’s failures, God had not abandoned him.

**Make a list of David’s supporters.**

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The priests, gentiles, his servants, and his friends remained loyal to the king even when it could cost them their careers or lives. Most

importantly, God still supported his servant. Even though the current situation resulted from several failures on David’s part, God quickly responded to David’s prayers for help and guidance.

**Think about it: Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13.**

**Why can we always count on God’s faithfulness?**

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While David was comforted by loyal friends and God’s obvious response to his requests, David faced public betrayal and opposition.

**Read 2 Samuel 16:1-4. Why was the betrayal described in these verses so devastating? What had David done for Mephibosheth?**

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One of David’s most noble acts in his reign was to allow Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son, to eat at the king’s table and to maintain the lands that belonged to his ancestor Saul. According to Ziba, Mephibosheth’s servant, Mephibosheth failed to remain loyal to his benefactor and hoped that the confusion of the situation would result in his own appointment to the throne of Israel. We will find later that Ziba’s claims may have been a ruse, but in the moment, David transferred ownership of Mephibosheth’s property to Ziba to thank him for the refreshment.



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## Read 2 Samuel 16:5-12.

The final detractor that David met was Shimei, a relative of Saul. As David and his supporters fled, Shimei cursed David for his violence against the house of Saul. It is unclear to which violence Shimei referred. So far in 2 Samuel, David had not laid a hand upon Saul or his sons and had even granted great blessings to Mephibosheth. While David did take the throne after Saul and Ish-Bosheth, he did so without raising a hand to Saul's family. There is an event that has not yet been described in the book that may be the cause of Shimei's hatred for David.

## Read 2 Samuel 21:1-9

Whatever the reason for these curses, Shimei's claims hold little weight as David never acted maliciously towards Saul's house on his own accord.

### Who encourages David to act against Shimei?

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Joab's brother, Abishai, encourages David to take decisive judgment on Shimei for his curses. David humbly withheld action against Shimei because he knew that Shimei was not the real problem, Absalom was. David even attributed Shimei's curses to the Lord himself. What does he mean by that?

### Who was to blame for Saul losing his kingdom?

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### Why was it easy for Shimei to blame David?

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### Who was to blame for David losing his kingdom?

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David realized that while Shimei's curses were baseless, it recalled how Saul had similarly lost his kingdom because of his own sin. While others were involved in the process, it was Saul who was ultimately responsible for his own misery. David no doubt saw himself in Saul's shoes. David, the adulterer, murderer, and ineffective judge saw his current situation as the result of his own failings. David did not blame the people, Absalom, or God for his misfortune. He rightly blamed himself.

### Who does David look to for help in v. 12?

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Sometimes, God must break us down before he can rebuild us in his own image.



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**Read Jeremiah 18:1-11. Describe the connection between how God describes his authority in this passage and how David understood God's authority in 2 Samuel 16:12.**

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I want you to take a moment to review this passage from 2 Samuel 15:13-16:14. Look at David's actions and the focus of his words. David has renewed his commitment to God. Amidst fleeing his home, facing rejection by his people, and being betrayed by his own son, David quickly turns his heart towards the Lord for comfort, help, and wisdom. In this, perhaps one of the lowest points in his life, he saw with great clarity who was to blame for the situation, and who could save him from it. Rejection by his people brought renewal of his trust and reliance on God. While he wept and mourned, David's acceptance of his own failing and of God's power allowed him to find refreshment in his exile (2 Samuel 16:14).

Often, we must be at our most vulnerable to realize our need for God. Sometimes, we are broken down, like an inferior piece on the potter's wheel so that God can remold us into something useful. David, the earthly king of

Israel, realized that he was nothing without the help of the heavenly king of all the world. By relying on God's omnipresence and omnipotence, we can find refreshment in the direst of situations.

**How can you make it a practice to consult the Lord in every circumstance of your life?**

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**Think about it: There are many parallels between the circumstances and events described in David's escape to the Mount of Olives and Jesus's time in the garden, also on the Mount of Olives, on the night he was betrayed. Read Matthew 26:17-56 and compare and contrast these situations.**

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