



# LONG STORY SHORT

## A Year through the Bible

### Reflection Guide

#### The Trials of a King: 2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles

##### Exploring the Story, Chapter 12

David may be a hero of the Bible's story, but David is far from perfect. He—like all of us—sins and falls short of the life God desires for him. And along the way, David's slips—like all sin—cause real damage. This week, we get a more complete picture of King David as we see how he puts God's promises to the test.

#### MONDAY

**Read:** 2 Samuel 11–12

**Reflect:** The prophet Nathan confronts David after his affair with Bathsheba and his murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. David's eyes are opened to his guilt, and he confesses to Nathan that he has sinned. Despite his confession and receiving God's forgiveness, David's sin still has consequences. Do you find it easy or challenging to acknowledge your own brokenness? Why? What, if anything, does this story tell you about the place of confession in the Christian life?

**Respond:** In prayer, confess your brokenness to God. Ask for forgiveness and rest in the assurance that forgiveness is yours even before you ask.

#### TUESDAY

**Read:** Psalm 51

**Reflect:** This psalm records David's prayer of confession after Nathan confronted him. With shocking honesty about how all-encompassing his brokenness is, David begs for God to cleanse him of his sin and to be reconciled with him. Which part of this psalm, if any, resonates most deeply with you? Why? What resources, if any, does your Christian faith give you to follow David's example and come clean in confession?

**Respond:** How could you rewrite this psalm to make it your own? Try to write your own psalm of confession.

#### WEDNESDAY

**Read:** 2 Samuel 14–15

**Reflect:** Absalom flees David's anger after killing his brother Amnon. After some years, David's anger subsides, and Joab devises a way to bring Absalom back. A woman points out that David is far harsher with his own family than with others, and that God's own desire is for reconciliation, not vengeance. What, if anything, does this passage show you about God's grace? Based on this passage, why do you think God wants to be reconciled with us?

**Respond:** Reflect on your faith journey. How has God worked to bring you back when you have been separated from God?

#### THURSDAY

**Read:** 2 Samuel 18–19

**Reflect:** With the end of Absalom's revolt the threat to God's promise to David has similarly been defeated. David receives the news of Absalom's death with grief and mourning. The preservation of God's promise has come at great personal cost to David. When, if ever, have you experienced paralyzing grief like David's? What, if anything, eventually brought you comfort?

**Respond:** Reflect on your own faith journey. What costs have you borne as God's promise has been fulfilled in your own life? What if anything, makes it worth it to you to bear these costs?

#### FRIDAY

**Read:** 1 Chronicles 21–22

**Reflect:** By taking a census, David provokes God's anger and brings a plague on his kingdom; 70,000 people die as a result. David buys a threshing floor and animal to offer sacrifices to God, and determines the future place of the temple. Read 21:24. Concretely, what, if anything, does your faith cost you? Are you comforted or challenged by David's refusal to offer sacrifices that have not cost him anything? Why?

**Respond:** In prayer, spend time reflecting on your own faith and life. Is God calling you to make more costly sacrifices with your life?

#### SATURDAY

**Read:** Psalm 32

**Reflect:** David's life is one of repentance. Certainly, David is portrayed as a hero of the faith, but his story is told honestly—the rough parts are not papered over. This psalm is another of David's psalms, rejoicing in God's grace and forgiveness. It encourages us to seek God's forgiveness and to trust in God's mercy. When, if ever, have you experienced the joy and freedom David writes about in the psalm? What, if anything, does this joy and freedom enable you to do that you otherwise would be unable to do? How so?

**Respond:** In prayer, take refuge in God's forgiveness and rejoice in God's mercy and grace.

#### SUNDAY

**Read:** 1 Chronicles 28–29

**Reflect:** David's final words to his son Solomon are to know God intimately and to serve God wholeheartedly (28:9). Solomon's success as the leader of God's people will depend on his own devotion to God. If Solomon wants to leave a legacy of faith, he will need to cultivate a life of faith. In what ways, if any, do you strive to know God intimately and serve God wholeheartedly? What more could you do to "Be strong, and do the work" of living faithfully (28:10)?

**Respond:** In worship this morning, praise God because God wants you to know God and to find God.