

## God: The One Who Knows My Heart

### David

*I Samuel 8 – II Samuel 12, I Chronicles 22, I Kings 2*

The book of I Samuel records the lives of Samuel, Saul and David. But it is really a story of God's unfolding plan to call His people to Himself and to eventually provide for them, through His Son who would be their eternal King.

Through the six lessons, the students will see the heart of Samuel who listened to God and obeyed His instructions even in the face of opposition. They will notice that the Israelites rejected God in their hearts as their king and wanted a king like the nations around them. The students will see how Saul stood above the crowd, but he did not have a heart that trusted or obeyed God.

Then they will see the contrast with David who wholeheartedly followed after God. The obedience of young David displays a courage that is bold for the God. Loyalty inspires obedience. He trusted and obeyed God even when those around him mocked him or even tried to kill him. In the concluding lesson, the students will see Jesus, who always did the will of the Father and still does, reigning as King of Kings who is worthy to be trusted and obeyed.

These main Biblical characters introduce for us the character quality of loyalty.

*Loyalty is faithfully obeying my authorities and committing to significant relationships.*

*Loyalty inspires obedience, dependability, supportiveness, commitment.*

*A lack of loyalty brings disobedience. (Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 8)\**

Loyalty requires a recognition of authority and trust in that authority.

Obedience can be an outward exercise as in obeying rules out of obligation or it can be from the heart as in a response to being loved and given protection, provision and care.

God is the one who knows our hearts and our motivation for obeying.

Following someone or a creed is a sign of obedience whether acknowledged or not.

For example: when teens and pre-teens feel the threat of acceptance being withheld by their peers, they may not think of their response of giving in or following their peers as obedience by adhering to certain standards. Yet they are changing their course or way of life to align themselves with another's standards.

**In Lesson one,** "The Heart That Follows God," there is the contrast between the obedience of Samuel and the disobedience of the Israelites and Saul. The children will see the outcome of disobedience. The Holy God must judge those rejecting His instructions. Following God means listening to Him and obeying Him.

**In Lesson two,** "A Heart After God," Samuel continues to be loyal to God by listening to God's instructions and obeying Him even with the real possibility of opposition from Saul. Young David was caring for and protecting the sheep while the rest of the family was having a special gathering with Samuel. David's loyal heart ignited godly stewardship of what was entrusted into his hands (the sheep) by his father. In regard to choosing a leader, the LORD said

that He looks on the heart, not on the outward appearance. Later, in Acts 13:22 it is written that God said that he had found in David a man after His heart who would do His will. II Chronicles 16:9 says, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”

**In Lesson three,** “The Heart Bold for God’s Glory,” the students will see loyalty in David’s attitudes and actions in four areas: to God, to God’s people Israel, to his father and to the king God had chosen, Saul. In a future lesson there is a fifth dimension: loyalty to a close friend, Jonathan, and his family.

David’s loyalty was expressed in a **servant’s attitude** (or humility), following his father’s instructions and playing the harp for King Saul to calm him. Humility is “honoring others by drawing attention to them instead of myself.” (*Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 10*) Even though Samuel had anointed David as the next king, David humbly waited on God’s timing and served Saul.

David’s loyalty also ignited **courage or boldness** in contrast to the Israelite army and Saul who were afraid. David stood up for what God says is right and true, while doing it in the right way. (CEF lesson text pg. 32) David was “conquering fear in order to assist others,” which is demonstrating courage. (*Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 9*)

David’s loyalty to God and his people was expressed in his desire to confront Goliath. His courage was ridiculed by a brother but accepted by Saul. While Saul tried to give David his own armor, David gave testimony to the faithfulness and power of the God whom He knew and served. He trusted in God.

Loyalty led David to godly stewardship: taking care of, protecting and providing for his father’s sheep. He told Saul what he did when his father’s sheep were attacked. He would do the same to defend Israel by the power of the God of Israel. David wanted the world to know that the God of Israel still reigned in victory and is worthy of everyone’s loyalty.

**In Lesson four,** “The Heart That Trusts God’s Plan,” the students will watch as David continues to be loyal to God and to His appointed king, Saul, even though Saul constantly desired to pursue him and kill him. “King Saul had a bad habit of disobeying God’s clear commands. Time after time, he selfishly drew people’s attention away from God and focused their attention instead on himself as their king.” (Skip Garmo)

David’s peers, at an opportune time, encouraged him to fight back and kill Saul. In a reaction, David did not harm Saul, but cut off a corner of his robe. David’s loyal heart realized his error, he felt convicted of his action and said, “No,” that he would not raise his hand against “the Lord’s anointed,” nor allow his men to harm Saul. Later, a similar situation occurred. David was loyal, giving the same response. Conviction is “holding a value or belief so firmly that it influences my attitudes and actions.” (*Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 4*) David’s loyalty fueled the conviction of his action and changed his future choices.

God encouraged David through his friendship with Saul's son, Prince Jonathan. Jonathan accepted God's choice of the next king, David. Jonathan was loyal to David to protect him by warning him when Saul planned to harm David. David's loyalty was acknowledged when he got to have a conversation with Saul who recognized that David had an opportunity to kill him, but instead spared his life. Saul wept and declared David more righteous than he, having repaid evil for good, and asked God's blessing on David. He also asked that David be loyal to Saul's family. David swore that he would not harm Saul's family.

David proved to have a heart that trusts God's plan to make him the next king by waiting for God's perfect timing for 10 years. When he heard of Saul's and Jonathan's death, he mourned greatly and punished by death the enemy who claimed to have killed Saul. He commended the Israelites who rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons, saying that they showed "**loyalty**" to Saul and buried him. David asked the Lord, in turn, to show steadfast love and faithfulness to them for their loyalty. David, who remained loyal to God and to those in authority, was crowned king in Hebron.

**In lesson five**, "God's Heart of Kindness," David acts out of loyalty to Saul and Jonathan by showing kindness, protecting and providing for Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. "Kindness is selflessly caring about and helping others." (*Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide*, pg. 7) While new kings typically removed any possibility of the former king's family from taking back the throne, David did the opposite. In loyalty and kindness to Saul's family, he restored the land owned by the family to Mephibosheth along with servants to care for and farm the land. He also invited Mephibosheth into the palace to eat with King David at his table, treating Mephibosheth as his own son.

**In lesson six**, "Review and the Rest of the Story," the students first see God's heart through His promise to David. That promise is to be the King of the world that He made and loves through His plan to send Jesus. Jesus, His Son, would be born in David's family line. He will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Because God always keeps His word, David was highly honored by this promise and gave thanks to God, fueling His loyalty to the Lord.

However, God did not give this promise to David because David was perfect, but because God is sovereign, merciful and all knowing. David was human as we all are and there were times that he ignored the warnings or conviction in His heart not to stray away from God's path. His heart paid dearly for those transgressions along with the pain caused to the lives of others. Yet, God is faithful when we are not. He drew David back into relationship with God the Father and forgave him. Yet David paid a price, the practical consequences for his sin.

To honor the Lord, David wanted to build a temple for God. God's plan was that David's son Solomon would build the temple, which he did. Eventually, Jesus was born through the family line of David. Jesus is the perfect King who will reign someday in a new kingdom. All will be loyal to Him because He is worthy of everyone's trust, obedience and love.

Loyalty's actions obediently follow and serve faithfully out of respect and honor, confident of the trustworthiness of the one being served.

**L:** Lord of my life, leaving other passions behind

**O:** Obey only one

**Y:** Yield and say, "Yes" to God.

**A:** Always aware and alert, all the time, watching the hand of the Master.

**L:** Love, a longing desire to serve, long-term commitment.

### Webster's Dictionary Definitions

#### Loyalty

- Faithful allegiance to one's lawful government
- Faithfulness to a person to whom fidelity is held to be due
- Faithfulness to a cause, ideal or custom
- Loyalty implies a faithfulness that is steadfast in the face of any temptation to renounce, desert or betray.

#### Faithfulness

- Steadfast in affection or allegiance
- Firm in adherence to promises or in observance to duty
- True to the facts

#### Fidelity

- Faithful to accuracy in detail or exactness to the degree that a reproduction correctly represents the sound or quality as in electronic devices.
- Continuing and compelling faithfulness to an obligation, trust or duty.
- Devotion, stressing zeal and service amounting to self-dedication and allegiance.

### Applications

What ignites loyalty in my heart to God?

- Realizing His love and sacrifice for me. (*He values me because He made me in His image and He is able to rescue me from sin.*)
- Realizing His desire to make me His very own. (*I am wanted and claimed.*)
- Realizing His promise for a future with Him and purpose for my life. (*He gives me hope.*)
- Realizing the outcome of not choosing His way. (*I am lovingly warned.*)

. Loyalty leads to godly stewardship.

- David protected and cared for His father's sheep.
- I must take care, protect and provide for what the Master has entrusted into my hands.
- Being loyal to God means recognizing Him as the true owner of my body and life.

Being loyal to God protects me from selfishness: drawing attention to myself, choosing my way over God's way, honoring myself.

- God's Word changes my heart, protecting me from selfish pride and helping me to "be humble" before Him. He wants me to "honor Him by drawing attention to Him rather than to myself." (Skip Garmo)
- God is also pleased when, instead of being selfishly proud, I am humble toward others, honoring them by drawing attention to them rather than to myself. (Skip Garmo)

**Questions for myself:**

- Should I obey God because I have no choice, or should I obey out of love for Him, remembering His great love and sacrifice for me?
- How can I respect and honor God and others by drawing attention to them instead of myself?
- What outcomes have I experienced when I placed my pride and my way first in my attitudes and decisions? Did it lead to better friendships or God being honored or did it lead to the opposite?
- Am I willing to go about my day trusting and accepting God's good timing instead of being impatient and doing what I want, when I want it?
- Am I able to rejoice over another's opportunity that I would have desired if God so chooses, trusting in His direction for my life?
- Am I willing to seek and accept God's forgiveness when I fail, then stepping forward to obey Him willingly?

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