

THE BOOKS OF
I-II Samuel

Leading a Virtual Study?

While in-person Bible studies are always the best option, they may not be possible. As you follow campus guidelines for in-person gatherings, you may need to take your study virtual. If so, we have you covered!

VIRTUAL DISCOVERY KIT

Open your Virtual Discovery Kit online using the the link below. Find helpful resources to use in conjunction with this guide including visuals to screen share during the study, and more.

[BIT.LY/VIRTUAL-KIT](https://bit.ly/virtual-kit)

About Samuel

Leadership is embedded into our culture, even if we all serve in different capacities throughout our lives. Whether you're a small group leader, a manager, the president of your university, or the president of your country, one thing is true for us all: everything depends on our health and character as leaders. Reputations, organizations, and nations can rise and fall based on our health as leaders.

In the Old Testament, God called the people of Israel to be leaders in the world, and while each person served in a different position, one position rose above them all: the king. Like with us, everything depended on the health and character of the king. In fact, throughout Israel's history, the nation would rise and fall on the health of their kings.

This was especially true for one king in particular, named David. Even though he started out as a nobody from nowhere, God paved the way for David to become king because of his heart and love for God and his people. During his rise, David was responsible for unifying and establishing Israel as a nation and a world power. Yet, at the peak of his prosperity and power, David made tragic failures that eventually led to the nation's division and destruction.

This rise and fall of King David is the story we'll be following through the Theta Series as we study the Book of Samuel. As you follow David's story filled with loyalty and betrayal, peace and war, and faith and failure, we hope that you will see the God who always remains faithful in spite of broken leaders like us.

How to Use This Guide

As you know, Bible Study is a vital part of leading a small group, but it's not the *only* part. Building friendships and following up outside of the study is crucial to leading a transformative group. This Leader's Guide is designed to help you lead both inside and outside of your group.

STUDY BREAKDOWN



THE PASSAGE

Each study begins with the portion of Scripture that you'll be exploring that week.



BEFORE THE STUDY

This section is designed to enrich your own personal understanding of each passage as you prepare to lead your friends.



DURING THE STUDY

This section provides you with everything needed to lead an engaging study. Pay attention to section headers and pacing icons.



AFTER THE STUDY

This section is designed to help you capture what God is doing in the lives of your friends and identify ways to help them grow closer to Jesus outside of the study.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS



PACING ICONS

Keep track of how much time the section should take



LEARN & LEAD

Lead well by learning more with InterVarsity's online training and resources



GO DEEPER

Go deeper into the passage with Bible Project's explainer videos

How to Lead Study

Leading an engaging study is the best way for your friends to encounter and follow Jesus! Below are the three parts to every study. For more training, visit howto.bible.

SHAPE OF DISCOVERY STUDY



ENTERING THE PASSAGE

What does it say?

The goal while entering the passage is to observe what it says. Use the prompts in this section to help your group understand the background, identify the facts (e.g. who, what, when, where, etc.), and engage their senses and emotions. The key is to be curious and ask questions about everything!



DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

What does it mean?

The goal while discussing the passage is to interpret what it means. Use the prompts in this section to gather and discuss observations and questions. While observations focus on the what, interpretation questions focus on the why. The key is to discover why the author wrote this passage, what they were trying to communicate, and how the original audience would have understood it.



APPLYING THE PASSAGE

What does it mean to me, us, and our world?

The goal while applying the passage is to discover what it means for us and how we are meant to live our lives differently in light of it. Use the prompts in this section to summarize, clarify, and respond to the meaning of the passage. The key is to seek transformation, not just more information - about the Bible!

Discussion Guidelines

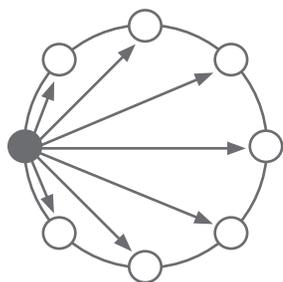
Review the Discussion Guidelines below as you begin the first few studies. Revisit them any time someone new attends. This will help everyone know what to expect.

PARTICIPATION IS CRUCIAL

In a Traditional Study, the *Leader* uses *their* questions to drive the discussion. However, in a Discovery Study, it's the *group's* questions that drive the discussion. Discovery Studies are more engaging and interactive, but they only work if everyone participates.

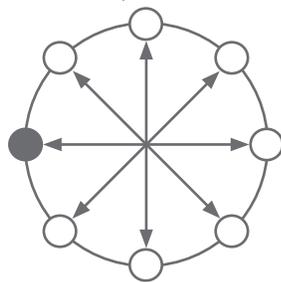
TRADITIONAL STUDY

Leader Driven



DISCOVERY STUDY

Group Driven



ASSUME YOU KNOW NOTHING

Whether the passage being studied is very familiar or completely foreign, it's best for everyone to assume they are reading it for the first time.

Sometimes knowing something can keep you from seeing something new. Focus on the passage and keep outside knowledge to a minimum.

BE REAL

Small Groups aren't just Bible Studies. They're communities, and the best communities are real and authentic. No one is perfect and everyone has questions so be real with one another.

HAVE SOME RESPECT

Everyone does not have to agree, but everyone must respect each other. The best discussions have multiple viewpoints.

Discussion Tips

Use the tips below to facilitate a great discussion. For more tips, visit InterVarsity's howto.bible.

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Context First. Then Handouts.

Always give context (i.e. Prior to Passage) first before giving handouts. Context is critical but people tend to stop listening when given handouts.

Embrace Silence

Silence can be awkward but it's crucial for studying the passage. Silent study will make for better sharing later. Give people between 3-5 minutes of silent study.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Facilitate First. Then Share.

When discussing questions, don't share your thoughts right away. Focus on facilitating the discussion first. Then share.

Avoid Long Tangents

People lose focus with long tangents. Refocus your group by either repeating the original question or asking the next one.

Involve Everyone

Try to get everyone to share at least once during each study. Keep asking, "What do others think?"

Text the Answer

Use the passage rather than opinions to answer questions—"Where do you see that in the passage?"

Keep It Moving

Don't wait for the discussion to die before asking the next question. Move on as the discussion begins to slow.

Use Quick Recaps

Quickly summarize the story before moving on to next section of text. It helps build tension and momentum.

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Use Group Lingo

Use the group's language rather than the guide's as much as possible. It will feel more personal and natural.

Choose One Application

Discuss only *one* Application Option. Choose the one that best fits your group's discussion.

Weekly Preparation

Preparation is crucial to leading a great study! Set aside one hour each week to prepare. If other leaders are using the same study, prepare together! For more on preparing, visit [howto.bible/how-prepare](https://www.howto.bible/how-prepare).



STUDY PASSAGE 45 MIN

Before you consider what God has for your friends, consider what he has for you. Study the passage and apply it to your own life first. The best leaders lead from personal experience.



REVIEW LEADER GUIDE 10 MIN

Review the study in the Leader Guide and familiarize yourself with the questions and content. The more familiar you are with the guide the less you'll have to reference it during the study, which frees you up to focus on the discussion.



PRAY 5 MIN

Pray that the LORD would meet you and your friends through each study, and watch for how he shows up!



INVITE

Invite by sharing *why* not *what*. Rather than just sharing the place, time, and content of your study (i.e. the what), share why people might enjoy coming to your study (i.e. the why).

Consider your why. Is it to ask questions about faith? Grow in faith? Grow closer as friends? Learn how God can use us to make a difference? Clarify your "why," and then share it!

First time invitations are best done in-person. However, a text reminder the day of each study is also helpful.

Study Plan

Study	Date	Time	Location
One			
Two			
Three			
Four			
Five			
Six			
Seven			
Eight			

DATE & TIME

There is rarely a perfect time for everyone. Just pick a time that works for most people and be consistent.

LOCATION

Choose a place that is quiet, relaxed, and familiar to your group.

HOSPITALITY

Make people feel at home with snacks, drinks, and a comfortable setting. Invite your friends to bring snacks as well.

Table of Contents

STUDY ONE <i>1 Samuel 16:1-13</i>	11
STUDY TWO <i>1 Samuel 17:32-50</i>	23
STUDY THREE <i>1 Samuel 24:1-22</i>	35
STUDY FOUR <i>2 Samuel 9:1-13</i>	47
MIDPOINT REVIEW <i>Reflection Guide</i>	58
STUDY FIVE <i>2 Samuel 11:1-18, 26-27</i>	61
STUDY SIX <i>Call to Faith</i> <i>2 Samuel 12:1-10, 13-14</i>	73
STUDY SEVEN <i>Psalms 51:1-17</i>	85
STUDY EIGHT <i>Psalms 30:1-12</i>	97
SEMESTER REVIEW <i>Reflection Guide</i>	108





1 Samuel 16:1-13

¹ The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."² But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"⁵ Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the

outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."⁹ Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one."¹⁰ Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these."¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one."¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.



Before the Study

PREPARING

In order to better understand the meaning of a passage, it's critical to know how the *original audience* would have heard it. The context below has been provided for you to better understand the world in which these listeners lived. It will also be helpful in answering cultural questions that arise during the study.

Samuel (v.1)

Samuel was considered the last of the Jewish tribal leaders and the first of the prophets (1 Samuel 3:19-20). The people of Israel looked to him as the voice of God in all political and societal matters.

Saul (v.1)

Saul came from a wealthy family and was considered the largest and most handsome man in all of Israel (1 Samuel 9:1-2). Originally, Samuel anointed, or inaugurated, Saul as the first king of Israel in front of thousands of people (10:20-24). Even though Saul looked like a king, he was eventually rejected by God as king because of his repeated failure to obey God (15:26-28).

Horn of Oil/Anointing (v.1,3)

In this culture, kings were typically anointed, or inaugurated, by pouring oil on their heads. The oil was contained in a hollowed animal horn.



HEART

Why does God care so much about the state of our hearts?

Learn more at:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/lev-heart/>

Jesse of Bethlehem (v.2)

Jesse was the father of a no-name family from a no-name place. They did not have the wealth or status that would make sense for the lineage of a king (1 Samuel 18:23).

Consecrate (v.5)

To consecrate means "to set apart", which for an individual included taking a ceremonial bath and washing your clothes to prepare for a divine event (Exodus 19:10). It was like putting on your Sunday's best to go to church.

Jesse's Sons (v.6,8,9)

Traditionally, because of his birth order and appearance, Jesse's first born son, Eliab, would have made the most sense for God's choice as Israel's next king. He looked like a king. Abinadab and Shammah would be the next likely choices as the second and third oldest.

Heart (v.7)

All of God's Law was summarized in the commands to love God with all your heart and love people like yourself (Deuteronomy 6:5-6; Matthew 22:36-40). People often measure a person by their outward appearances like success, wealth, and beauty, but God measures a person by their heart; that is their motives, character, and the extent of their love for God and people. While things don't always seem as they appear, the heart is the truest reflection of who a person is.

David (v.13)

As the youngest son, David would be the least likely choice for king, which is why he's not even initially present at the anointing ceremony. Whereas Saul's inauguration was large and public, David's election is quite small and private.



During the Study

ENTERING THE PASSAGE 5-10 MIN

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Review the Discussion Guidelines (page six) before beginning.

PRIOR TO THIS PASSAGE

This story drops us into the middle of an election for a new king over the nation of Israel. However, to understand this search for a new leader, it's important to understand the story of the king that came before this moment: Saul. Saul was previously anointed, or elected, by the prophet Samuel to serve as Israel's first king. Family wealth, influence, and handsome features made him fit the part of a king, and many said there was no one else like Saul among their people. Yet, rather than leading the people as God instructed him, Saul repeatedly chose to do things his own way. As a result, God rejected him as king and vowed to give the throne to someone else worthy of the role. Our passage picks up immediately following Saul's rejection, with the prophet Samuel listening to God's voice and direction to find the next king of Israel.

READ ALOUD

Have three people read the passage aloud for the group. You can use the sections on the following page to assign verses to read.

CREATIVE ENTRY

Imagine you are Samuel. You had big dreams for what Saul would accomplish during his reign only to see them dashed by his repeated failures. Why would you be sad for Saul?

STUDY SILENTLY

Invite everyone to reread the passage silently. Note who, where, when, and what. Imagine yourself in the story. Note repeated words, comparisons and contrasts. Develop questions for further discussion.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE 40 MIN

SHARE OBSERVATIONS. GATHER QUESTIONS.

First, invite everyone to share their observations. Then, gather questions asking for verse references and write them in their respective sections below. Do not discuss until everyone has shared. Finally, use the checkboxes to select no more than six questions to discuss.

DISCUSS QUESTIONS

Down & Disillusioned (v.1-3)

- Why is Samuel afraid that Saul will kill him? (v.2)
- _____
- _____

Look of a Leader (v.4-10)

- Why is Samuel convinced Eliab is God's choice for king? (v. 6)
- Why does God look at the heart rather than the appearance? (v.7)
 - If you were choosing a partner for a group project, who would you choose: the 4.0 student who's unresponsive and uninterested in working with you, or the solid 3.0 student who's responsive, reliable, and a team player?
- _____
- _____

An Unlikely King (v.11-13)

- What makes God choose David, the youngest son, to be the next king? (v.11)
- _____
- _____

APPLYING THE PASSAGE



10-15
MIN

SUMMARY

Saul, the king that came before this story, seemed like the complete package. Wealth, beauty, and prestige made him look like the ultimate leader. But when Saul repeatedly failed to follow God's guidance, Samuel began the search for a new king to lead Israel, starting with Jesse's sons. While Samuel believes that Eliab looks the part for the new king, God not only passes on him, but he passes the next six sons too! When all the options seem to be exhausted, Samuel turns to the youngest son, who was an unlikely candidate in everyone's eyes. Unlike Samuel, God didn't want someone who simply *looked* like a king, but rather someone who would *look* to God as their king. In this divine appointment God replaces the wealthy, handsome Saul with a no name shepherd boy named David; an unlikely king with an uncanny heart for God and his people.

BIG IDEA

God doesn't want leaders who simply look the part but leaders who reflect his heart.

APPLICATION OPTIONS

Discuss *one* Application Option from the next page. Then finish by sharing The Bigger Story and Creative Response.

THE BIGGER STORY

If we want to become the type of leaders that God wants, then we need a better example than David. Like Saul, David eventually failed God and his people. Yet, thousands of years later, God would choose an even more unlikely leader in Jesus. Like David, Jesus was a nobody. In fact, the Bible describes Jesus as ugly saying, "he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him" (Isaiah 53:2). Jesus looked nothing like a king, and yet, he had the one thing that every other leader in human history lacked... *heart*. Where every other leader failed, Jesus succeeded. On the cross, Jesus gave his life to love his people. Jesus wasn't the leader we wanted, but he was the leader we needed. It's through experiencing his love and following his lead that we can become the type of leaders that don't just look the part but truly reflect God's heart.

CREATIVE RESPONSE

Depending on the comfort of your group, you can simply pray or creatively respond through journaling, music, or another form of prayer.

APPLICATION OPTIONS

Man in the Mirror

When we look at ourselves, we typically focus on our outward appearance; that is our achievements, physical appearance, or even religious activity. Yet, God focuses on the appearance of our heart; that is the extent of our love for him and other people. **If you were to look at your heart in the mirror, what would stand out to you? In what ways do you just look the part? How might knowing God's love for you motivate you to focus more on your heart?**

Measuring Up

When we look at other people, we typically measure them by their outward appearance; that is the way they look, the clothes they wear, or the color of their skin. Yet, God measures people by their heart; that is their motives, character, and love for him and other people. **What is the danger of measuring people by their appearance? What types of people might you be overlooking or avoiding because they don't look the part? How can we train ourselves to focus on people's heart as God does?**

Heart of a Leader

When it comes to viewing and choosing leaders, God does not care if someone looks the part. God looks at their heart, their motives, and their character. **What does our society look for in leaders today? Consider leaders in politics, the church, or even influencers leading others online. How might focusing on the heart of a leader change the way you view, follow, or vote for leaders?**

