

The 10 Spies

Moses commissioned twelve spies, one from each tribe of Israel, to go and search out Canaan and ascertain the nature of the land and its inhabitants ([Numbers 13:1-20](#)). They went up and saw the land and its inhabitants; they brought back a cluster of grapes, some pomegranates, and figs ([Numbers 13:21-26](#)). They even brought back a united assessment of the land: it was a great land, “flowing with milk and honey,” but the people who live there were strong, in great and fortified cities, and the descendants of Anak (the Nephilim, [Numbers 13:33](#)) lived there, as well as Amalekites, Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, and Canaanites ([Numbers 13:27-29](#)).

Caleb, the spy from the tribe of Judah, then encouraged Israel to go and possess the land ([Numbers 13:30](#)). But ten of the other spies threw cold water on that suggestion, emphasizing the strength of the adversaries, considering themselves as grasshoppers in comparison ([Numbers 13:31-33](#)).

Israel went the way of the ten spies; they went so far as to express the desire to return to Egypt and slavery ([Numbers 14:1-4](#)). Caleb, along with Joshua, the spy from Ephraim, begged Israel to reconsider, affirming the goodness of the land and that YHWH would give it to them, confident that if YHWH was with them it would not matter how strong their foes might seem ([Numbers 14:5-9](#)). But it was too late; Israelites sought to stone Joshua and Caleb ([Numbers 14:10](#)).

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each were selected as chiefs of their tribe • Followed Moses’ instructions exactly
Weaknesses and Mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed fear to turn them away from obeying God • Lack of faith in God’s strength • Made the hearts of their people melt and retreat
Lessons from Their Lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t forfeit God’s Promised Land for yourself, your family or your people by giving into your fears • In God’s economy, majority does NOT rule. He does
Vital Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where: Israel • Occupations: Various backgrounds—chiefs of their respective tribes
Key Verses	<i>But the men that went up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.”</i> (Numbers 13:30)

Their story is told in Numbers 13 and 14.

Absalom

A father's mistakes are often reflected in the lives of his children. In Absalom, David saw a bitter replay and amplification of many of his own past sins. God had predicted that David's family would suffer because of his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. David's heart was broken as he realized that God's predictions were coming true. God forgave David, but he did not cancel the consequences of his sin. David was horrified as he saw his son's strengths run wild without the controls God had built into his own life. By most casual evaluations, Absalom would have made an excellent king, and the people loved him. But he lacked the inner character and control needed in a good leader. His appearance, skill, and position did not make up for his lack of personal integrity. David's sins took him away from God, but repentance brought him back. In contrast, Absalom sinned and kept on sinning. Although he relied heavily on the advice of others, he was not wise enough to evaluate the counsel he received. Can you identify with Absalom? Do you find yourself on a fast track toward self-destruction? Absalom wasn't able to say, "I was wrong. I need forgiveness." God offers forgiveness, but we will not experience that forgiveness until we genuinely admit our sins and confess them to God. Absalom rejected his father's love and ultimately God's love. How often do you miss entering back into God's love through the door of forgiveness?

Strengths and Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was handsome and charismatic like his father, David • Kindly comforted his sister, Tamar, after she had been raped and allowed her to live with him
Weaknesses and Mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avenged the rape of his sister, Tamar, by killing his half-brother Amnon • Plotted against his father to take away the throne • Consistently listened to the wrong advice
Lessons from His Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sins of parents are often repeated and amplified in their children • A smart man gets a lot of advice; a wise man evaluates the advice he gets • Actions against God's plans will fail, sooner or later
Vital Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where: Hebron • Occupation: Prince • Relatives: Father: David. Mother: Maacah. Half brothers: Amnon, Kileab, Solomon, and others. Sister: Tamar. • Contemporaries: Nathan, Jonadab, Joab, Ahithophel, Hushai
Key Verses	<p><i>"But while he was there, he sent secret messengers to all the tribes of Israel to stir up a rebellion against the king. 'As soon as you hear the ram's horn,' his message read, 'you are to say, "Absalom has been crowned king in Hebron'" (2 Samuel 15:10).</i></p>

Absalom's story is told in 2 Samuel 3:3; 13-19.

Achan

Achan's sin was grave. He took what was God's. The Israelites had been specifically warned about the consequences of not doing as God instructed. Joshua told them, "Keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it" ([Joshua 6:18](#)). Achan's sin was a clear and willful violation of a direct order, and he did bring trouble on the entire camp of Israel. Also, Achan was given time to repent on his own; he could have come forward at any time, yet chose to wait through the casting of lots. Rather than admit his guilt and perhaps call on the mercy of God or at least demonstrate reverence for Him, Achan attempted to hide.

The precious metals Achan took were meant to be given to the tabernacle; they were God's possession. So Achan not only disobeyed a direct order, but he stole from God Himself and then covered it up. The story of [Ananias and Sapphira](#) in Acts 5 is a similar warning against lying to God.

In the story of Achan we see just how deceptive sin can be. In the midst of a miraculous victory, Achan was enticed by a robe, some silver, and some gold—certainly none of that compares with the power of God he had just witnessed. Yet we know our own hearts can be just as easily swayed. Another aspect of sin's deception is that it promises a benefit that it just can't deliver. The stolen items did Achan absolutely no good; he couldn't spend the money, and he couldn't wear the clothes. What seemed of great worth to him was actually worthless, buried in a hole in the ground while guilt festered in his heart.

Weaknesses and Mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disobeyed God's command from Joshua• Covered up his sin. Kept quiet about it.• Did not care for its effect on himself, his family, Israel
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Lessons from His Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can be heroic to do what must be done and to do it right• Sin is deceptive. A promise it can't deliver and consequences much worse than we think.
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Vital Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where: Ai• Occupation: Farmer?• Relatives: Father: Zerah
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Key Verses	<p><i>"Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest."</i> (Joshua 7:20-21)</p>
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The story of Achan is found in Joshua 7.

Adonijah

Adonijah was the fourth son of King David. Adonijah’s mother was Haggith, one of David’s wives. Adonijah is best known for his failed attempts to usurp the throne of Israel after his father’s death.

Adonijah was “a very handsome man” ([1 Kings 1:6](#)) with a flair for showmanship (verse 5), but he was also badly behaved. When David was old and, on his deathbed, Adonijah—like his brother Absalom before him (2 Samuel 15)—gathered an army and put himself forward as king, regardless of the fact that David’s chosen successor was Solomon. Some influential men supported Adonijah’s move, including [Joab, the captain of the army](#); and Abiathar the priest. But others opposed Adonijah’s plans, including [Nathan the prophet](#), [Zadok](#) the priest, and David’s wife Bathsheba ([1 Kings 1:8](#)).

In spite of receiving mercy from King Solomon, Adonijah did not stop scheming. After King David’s death, he approached Bathsheba and implored her to ask Solomon to give him the hand of David’s former nurse, [Abishag](#), in marriage ([1 Kings 2:13–17](#)). This request showed that Adonijah still had designs on the throne, and Solomon was enraged. He ordered Adonijah to be executed, and the sentence was carried out that same day (verses 23–25). Solomon also dealt with Adonijah’s allies, removing Abiathar from the priesthood and executing Joab.

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handsome • Consulted and obtained support from military, priest.
Lessons from His Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any scheme against God’s plan will fail. • Leave well enough alone. Curb one’s lust (Abishag)
Vital Statistics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatives: Father: David. Mother: Haggith • Where: Near Jerusalem. Northern Judah • Occupations: King’s son
Key Verses:	<p><i>Then Nathan went to Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother, and asked her, “Haven’t you heard that Haggith’s son, Adonijah, has made himself king, and our lord David doesn’t even know about it?”</i> (1 Kings 1:11)</p>
<p><i>Adonijah’s story is told in 1 Kings 1,2</i></p>	

David (as a Father)

When we think of David, we think: shepherd, poet, giant-killer, king, ancestor of Jesus— in short, one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. But alongside that list stands another: betrayer, liar, adulterer, murderer. The first list gives qualities we all might like to have; the second, qualities that might be true of any one of us. The Bible makes no effort to hide David's failures. Yet he is remembered and respected for his heart for God. Knowing how much more we share in David's failures than in his greatness, we should be curious to find out what made God refer to David as "a man after my own heart" (Acts 13: 22).

David, more than anything else, had an unchangeable belief in the faithful and forgiving nature of God. He was a man who lived with great zest. He sinned, but he was quick to confess his sins. His confessions were from the heart, and his repentance was genuine. David never took God's forgiveness lightly or his blessing for granted. In return, God never held back from David either his forgiveness or the consequences of his actions. David experienced the joy of forgiveness even when he had to suffer the consequences of his sins.

We tend to get these two reversed. Too often we would rather avoid the consequences than experience forgiveness. Another big difference between us and David is that while he sinned greatly, he did not sin repeatedly. He learned from his mistakes because he accepted the suffering they brought. Often, we don't seem to learn from our mistakes or the consequences that result from those mistakes. What changes would it take for God to find this kind of obedience in you?

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatest king of Israel • Ancestor of Jesus Christ • Listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 • A man described by God himself as a man after his own heart
Weakness and Mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed adultery with Bathsheba • Arranged the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband • Directly disobeyed God in taking a census of the people • Did not deal decisively with the sins of his children
Lessons from His Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to honestly admit our mistakes is the first step in dealing with them • Forgiveness does not remove the consequences of sin • God greatly desires our complete trust and worship
Vital Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where: Bethlehem, Jerusalem • Occupations: Shepherd, musician, poet, soldier, king • Relatives: Father: Jesse. Wives: included Michal, Ahinoam, Bathsheba, Abigail. Sons: included Absalom, Amnon, Solomon, Adonijah. Daughters: included Tamar. • Contemporaries: Saul, Jonathan, Samuel, Nathan

Key Verses

*“For you are God, O Sovereign Lord. Your words are truth, and you have promised these good things to your servant. And now, may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you have spoken, and when you grant a blessing to your servant, O Sovereign Lord, it is an eternal blessing!”
(2 Samuel 7:28-29).*

David’s story is told in 1 Samuel 16— 1 Kings 2. He is also mentioned in Amos 6:5; Matthew 1:1, 6; 22:43-45; Luke 1:32; Acts 13:22; Romans 1:3; Hebrews 11:32.

Eli

Eli was one Old Testament person with a very modern problem. The recognition and respect he earned in public did not extend to his handling of his private affairs. He may have been an excellent priest, but he was a poor parent. His sons brought him grief and ruin. He lacked two important qualities needed for effective parental discipline: firm resolve and corrective action.

Eli responded to situations rather than solving them. But even his responses tended to be weak. God pointed out his sons' errors, but Eli did little to correct them. The contrast between God's dealing with Eli and Eli's dealing with his sons is clear— God gave warning, spelled out the consequences of disobedience, and then acted. Eli only warned. Children need to learn that their parents' words and actions go together. Both love and discipline must be spoken as well as acted out.

But Eli had another problem. He was more concerned with the symbols of his religion than with the God they represented. For Eli, the Ark of the Covenant had become a relic to be protected rather than a reminder of the Protector. His faith shifted from the Creator to the created.

It may be easier to worship things we can see, whether buildings, people, or Scripture itself, but such tangible things have no power in themselves. This book you hold is either merely a respectable religious relic, or it is the sharp and effective Word of God. Your attitude toward it is largely shaped by your relationship to the God from whom it comes. A relic or antique has to be carefully stored away; God's Word has to be used and obeyed. Which attitude accurately describes your approach to the Word of God?

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Judged Israel for 40 years• Spoke with Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and assured her of God's blessing• Reared and trained Samuel, the greatest judge of Israel
Weakness and Mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failed to discipline his sons or correct them when they sinned• Tended to react to situations rather than take decisive action• Saw the Ark of the Covenant as a relic to be cherished rather than as a symbol of God's presence with Israel
Lessons from His Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents need to discipline their children responsibly• Life is more than simply reacting; it demands action• Past victories cannot substitute for present trust
Vital Statistics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where: Shiloh• Occupations: High priest, judge of Israel• Relatives: Sons: Hophni and Phinehas• Contemporary: Samuel

Key Verses:

“Then the Lord said to Samuel, ‘I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn’t disciplined them. So, I have vowed that the sins of Eli and his sons will never be forgiven by sacrifices or offerings’” (1 Samuel 3:11-14).

Eli’s story is told in 1 Samuel 1– 4. He is also mentioned in 1 Kings 2: 26-27.

Eli's Sons

First Samuel offers much important information about the sins of [Eli's](#) sons, Hophni and Phinehas. The summary of their lifestyle is given in the introduction to these men in [1 Samuel 2:12](#): "Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD."

Because Eli's sons did not know or regard God, they acted in wicked ways. First, we are told that Eli's sons took a three-pronged fork and ate whatever meat they brought out of the pot when sacrificing an animal. This was in contradiction with the law for priests, who were commanded to eat the breast and upper thigh of the animals ([Leviticus 7:30–34](#)). Second, Eli's sons were sleeping with the women who were dedicated to the service of the tabernacle ([1 Samuel 2:22](#)). This was against God's law forbidding adultery ([Exodus 20:14](#)).

A "man of God" came to Eli and revealed the judgment that would come upon Eli's sons for these actions. The sign that the judgment was divine was included: "What happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day" ([1 Samuel 2:34](#)).

Soon after this time, Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, took the [Ark of the Covenant](#) out to battle against the Philistines. The Israelites were defeated, and judgment befell Eli's sons, as [1 Samuel 4:10–11](#) states: "The Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated, and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand-foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died."

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eli's sons? • Priests?
Weakness and Mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Took the best of the people's gifts and sacrifices for themselves and their appetites • Threatened the people to take their raw meat by force • Had sex with the women who were dedicated for God's service
Lessons from Their Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never take anything dedicated to God for yourself • Never take advantage of a woman, especially in the service of her God • Never treat the Lord or His offerings with contempt • Avoid even the appearance of evil in God's work
Vital Statistics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where: Shiloh • Occupations: High priest, judge of Israel • Relatives: Father: Eli • Contemporary: Samuel
Key Verses:	<i>'Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the Lord' (1 Samuel 2:12)</i>

The story of Hophni and Phinehas is told in 1 Samuel 2

Jezebel

The Bible is as honest about the lives of its heroes as it is about those who rejected God. Some Bible characters found out what God can do with failures when they turned to him. Many, however, neither admitted their failures nor turned to God.

Jezebel ranks as the most evil woman in the Bible. The Bible even uses her name as an example of people who completely reject God (Revelation 2: 20-21). Many pagan women married into Israel without acknowledging the God their husbands worshiped. They brought their religions with them. But no one was as determined as Jezebel to make all Israel worship her gods. To the prophet Elijah, she seemed to have succeeded. He felt he was the only one still faithful to God until God told him there were still 7,000 who had not turned from the faith.

Jezebel's one outstanding "success" was in contributing to the cause of the eventual downfall of the northern kingdom— idolatry. God punished the northern tribes for their idolatry by having them carried off into captivity.

Jezebel held great power. She not only managed her husband, Ahab, but she also had 850 assorted pagan priests under her control. She was committed to her gods and to getting what she wanted. She believed that the king had the right to possess anything he wanted. When Naboth refused to sell Ahab his vineyard, Jezebel ruthlessly had Naboth killed and took ownership of the land. Jezebel's plan to wipe out worship of God in Israel led to painful consequences. Before she died, Jezebel suffered the loss of her husband in combat and her son at the hand of Jehu, who took the throne by force. She died in the defiant and scornful way she had lived.

When comparing Jezebel and Elijah, we have to admire each one's strength of commitment. The big difference was to whom they were committed. Jezebel was committed to herself and her false gods; Elijah was totally committed to the one true God. In the end, God proved Elijah right. To what or to whom are you most committed? How would God evaluate your commitment?

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- Weakness and Mistakes:**
- Systematically eliminated the representatives of God in Israel
 - Promoted and funded Baal worship
 - Threatened to have Elijah killed
 - Believed kings and queens could rightfully do or have anything they wanted
 - Used her strong convictions to get her own way
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- Lessons from Their Life:**
- It is not enough to be committed or sincere. Where our commitment lies makes a great difference
 - Rejecting God always leads to disaster
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- Vital Statistics:**
- Where: Sidon, Samaria
 - Occupation: Queen of Israel
 - Relatives: Husband: Ahab. Father: Ethbaal. Sons: Joram, Ahaziah.
 - Contemporaries: Elijah, Jehu
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Key Verses:

“No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the Lord’s sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel” (1 Kings 21:25).

Jezebel’s story is told in 1 Kings 16: 31— 2 Kings 9:37. Her name is used as a synonym for great evil in Revelation 2:20.

Joab

Joab, the great military leader, had two brothers who were also famous soldiers: Abishai and Asahel. Joab proved to be the greatest leader of the three and was the commander of David's army throughout most of David's reign. There is no record that his troops ever lost a battle.

Joab was a fearless fighter like his brothers. Unlike them, he was also a brilliant and ruthless strategist. His plans usually worked, but he was seldom concerned about those hurt or killed by them. He did not hesitate to use treachery or murder to achieve his goals. His career is a story of great accomplishments and shameful acts. He conquered Jerusalem and the surrounding nations, defeated Abner, and reconciled Absalom and David. But he also murdered Abner, Amasa, and Absalom, took part in Uriah's murder, and plotted with Adonijah against Solomon. That plot led to his execution.

Joab set his own standards—he lived by them and died because of them. There is little evidence that Joab ever acknowledged God's standards. On one occasion he confronted David about the danger of taking a census without God's command, but this may have been little more than a move to protect himself. Joab's self-centeredness eventually destroyed him. He was loyal only to himself, even willing to betray his lifelong relationship with David to preserve his power.

Joab's life illustrates the disastrous results of having no source of direction outside oneself. Brilliance and power are self-destructive without God's guidance. Only God can give the direction we need. For that reason, he has made available his Word, the Bible, and he is willing to be personally present in the lives of those who admit their need for him.

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brilliant planner and strategist• Fearless fighter and resourceful commander• Confident leader who did not hesitate to confront even the king• Helped reconcile David and Absalom• Masterminded the conquest of Jerusalem
Weakness and Mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was repeatedly ruthless, violent, and vengeful• Carried out David's scheme to have Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, killed• Avenged his brother's murder by murdering Abner• Killed Absalom against David's orders• Plotted with Adonijah against David and Solomon
Lessons from Their Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those who live by violence often die by violence• Even brilliant leaders need guidance
Vital Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupation: Commander in chief of David's army• Relatives: Mother: Zeruah. Brothers: Abishai, Asahel. Uncle: David.• Contemporaries: Saul, Abner, Absalom

Key Verses

*“Do as he said,” the king replied. ‘Kill him there beside the altar and bury him. This will remove the guilt of Joab’s senseless murders from me and from my father’s family’”
(1 Kings 2: 31).*

Joab’s story is told in 2 Samuel 2— 1 Kings 2. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2:16; 11:5-9, 20, 26; 19:8-15; 20:1; 21:2-6; 26:28; and in the title of Psalm 60.

Nabal

Nabal is noteworthy for the brief interaction he had with David while David was on the run from [King Saul](#). The account of David and Nabal is found in 1 Samuel 25. Nabal was from the clan of Caleb, and his name means “fool”—a fact that suggests *Nabal* may have been a nickname he earned by his “harsh and evil” behavior (verse 3, BSB). Nabal lived near the town of Maoen in the hill country of Judea and possessed thousands of sheep and goats that he pastured near Carmel. Nabal was extremely wealthy; however, his greatest asset was his beautiful and intelligent wife, [Abigail](#).

An honest and noble man would have been glad to offer provisions to the brave men who had guarded his herdsman, flocks, and shepherds for weeks. A young man in Nabal’s employ described David’s men as “a wall around us, both day and night, the whole time we were herding our sheep near them” ([1 Samuel 25:16](#)). But Nabal was not an honest and noble man. He responded to David’s request with sneering arrogance and disdain: “Who is this fellow David?” Nabal asked David’s messengers. “Who does this son of Jesse think he is? There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters. Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I’ve slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?” (verses 10–11, NLT).

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- Weakness and Mistakes:**
- Mock’s David’s messengers (outlaws) and even David’s name and his kingship
 - Judges and ridicules David for ‘running away from his master.’
 - Nabal only saw his kingdom and himself at the center
 - Never even thanked David and his men for being ‘a wall of protection for him and his sheep’
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- Lessons from Their Life:**
- Coming from a godly family line ensures nothing
 - You can make a good decision in who you marry but still ruin your life by choosing to be worthless
 - Never repay good with evil!
 - Do NOT mock the king! Or anyone who has done good to you
 - Be kind. Be considerate. Be appreciative.
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- Vital Statistics:**
- Where: Carmel
 - Occupation: Land and livestock
 - Relatives: First husband: Abigail. Son: Kileab (Daniel).
 - Contemporaries: Saul, Michal, Ahinoam
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Nabal’s story is found in 1 Samuel 25.

Saul

First impressions can be deceiving, especially when the image created by a person's appearance is contradicted by his or her qualities and abilities. Saul presented the ideal visual image of a king, but the tendencies of his character often went contrary to God's commands for a king. Saul was God's chosen leader, but this did not mean he was capable of being king on his own.

During his reign, Saul had his greatest successes when he obeyed God. His greatest failures resulted from acting on his own. Saul had the raw materials to be a good leader—appearance, courage, and action. Even his weaknesses could have been used by God if Saul had recognized them and left them in God's hands. His own choices cut him off from God and eventually alienated him from his own people.

From Saul we learn that while our strengths and abilities make us useful, it is our weaknesses that make us usable. Our skills and talents make us tools, but our failures and shortcomings remind us that we need a Craftsman in control of our lives. Whatever we accomplish on our own is only a hint of what God could do through our lives. Does he control your life?

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First God-appointed king of Israel• Known for his personal courage and generosity• Stood tall, with a striking appearance
Weakness and Mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• His leadership abilities did not match the expectations created by his appearance• Impulsive by nature, he tended to overstep his bounds• Allowed jealousy to overcome him• He specifically disobeyed God on several occasions
Lessons from His Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• God wants obedience from the heart, not mere acts of religious ritual• Obedience always involves sacrifice, but sacrifice is not always obedience• God wants to make use of our strengths and weaknesses• Weaknesses should help us remember our need for God's guidance and help
Vital Statistics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where: The land of Benjamin• Occupation: King of Israel• Relatives: Father: Kish. Wife: Ahinoam. Sons: Jonathan, Malkishua, Abinadab, Ishbosheth (and possibly Ishvi). Daughters: Merab, Michal.

Key Verses

“But Samuel replied, ‘What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the Lord, he has rejected you as king’” (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

Saul’s story is told in 1 Samuel 9– 31. He is also mentioned in Acts 13:21

Solomon

Wisdom is only effective when it is put into action. Early in his life, Solomon had the sense to recognize his need for wisdom. But by the time Solomon asked for wisdom to rule his kingdom, he had already started a habit that would make his wisdom ineffective for his own life—he sealed a pact with Egypt by marrying Pharaoh’s daughter. She was the first of hundreds of wives married for political reasons. In doing this, Solomon went against not only his father’s last words but also God’s direct commands. His action reminds us how easy it is to know what is right and yet not do it.

It is clear that God’s gift of wisdom to Solomon did not mean that he couldn’t make mistakes. He had been given great possibilities as the king of God’s chosen people, but with them came great responsibilities; unfortunately, he tended to pursue the former and neglect the latter. While becoming famous as the builder of the Temple and the palace, he became infamous as a leader who excessively taxed and overworked his people. Visitors from distant lands came to admire this wise king, while his own people were gradually alienated from him.

Little is mentioned in the Bible about the last decade of Solomon’s reign. Ecclesiastes probably records his last reflections on life. In that book we find a man proving through bitter experience that finding meaning in life apart from God is a vain pursuit. Security and contentment are found only in a personal relationship with God. The contentment we find in the opportunities and successes of this life is temporary. The more we expect our successes to be permanent, the more quickly they are gone. Be sure to balance your pursuit of life’s possibilities with reliable fulfillment of your responsibilities.

Strengths and Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Third king of Israel, David’s chosen heir• The wisest man who ever lived• Author of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, as well as many of the proverbs and a couple of the psalms• Built God’s Temple in Jerusalem• Diplomat, trader, collector, patron of the arts
Weakness and Mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sealed many foreign agreements by marrying pagan women• Allowed his wives to affect his loyalty to God• Excessively taxed his people and drafted them into labor and military forces
Lessons from Their Life:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective leadership can be nullified by an ineffective personal life• Solomon failed to obey God, but did not learn the lesson of repentance until late in life• Knowing what actions are required of us means little without the will to do those actions
Vital Statistics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where: Jerusalem Occupation: King of Israel Relatives: Father: David. Mother: Bathsheba. Brothers: Absalom, Adonijah. Sister: Tamar. Son: Rehoboam.

Key Verses:

“Wasn’t this exactly what led King Solomon of Israel into sin?’ I demanded. ‘There was no king from any nation who could compare to him, and God loved him and made him king over all Israel. But even he was led into sin by his foreign wives’” (Nehemiah 13:26).

Solomon’s story is told in 2 Samuel 12:24— 1 Kings 11:43. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 28– 29; 2 Chronicles 1– 10; Nehemiah 13:26; Psalm 72; & Matthew 6:29; 12:42