



September 21, 2025  
*A Man After God's Heart*  
**Godly Restraint**  
1 Samuel 24:1-12

1. **Opening Discussion:** (You will probably want to use only one of these openers)

- a. Do you ever take shortcuts while traveling? When has an apparent shortcut ended up adding to the time required for a trip? If you've had one, describe a really bad experience relying on a shortcut? If you use GPS in your travels, what do you do when it suggests an "alternate route"?
- b. How patient are you? Are you willing to wait patiently for a desired outcome, or are you more inclined to take matters into your own hands to hurry them along? Suppose you use a digital video recorder to record movies or sporting events. Do you normally fast-forward through commercials or the play-by-play analysis in order to get back to the action?
- c. There are two old sayings: "The end justifies the means" and "Actions speak louder than words." Which one do you think best (of course, not perfectly) describes your philosophy of life?

2. **Prayer:**

- a. Adoration – Pray a Psalm or other Scripture to focus on praising God.
- b. Confession – Spend time confessing any known sins. 1 John 1:9
- c. Thanksgiving – Thank God for answered prayers, blessings, gifts, and opportunities to serve.
- d. Supplications
  - i. Pray for the activities of His Church locally and around the world.
  - ii. Pray for the spiritual and physical needs of others and yourself.
- e. **Least Reached People Group: Kraal of India** (*from the IMB "Loving the Lost Through Prayer" guide*)

"The Kraal [CRAWL] of India are a historically marginalized Muslim community of 6,900 people. Their ancestors were artisans who specialized in making earthenware pottery in all shapes and sizes. The Kraal still create pottery today. They enjoy salty hot tea and dress in long tunics like the other people in Kashmir, India, with the women adding a "dupatta" head covering. Even though the Bible and gospel videos have been translated into their language, Kashmiri, there are no known Kraal believers. Most Muslim Kraal practice a mystical version of Islam. Instead of trusting in God and His Word, they wear amulets with verses from the Quran to protect them from illnesses or evil spirits. Pray for the Kraal people of India, who are like empty and broken jars that cannot carry water, to gain access to the living water of Jesus Christ through gospel witnesses." [Note: this people group lives in the portion of India that has experienced significant flooding over the past few weeks.]

3. **Sermon Key Points**

- a. God Gave Saul's Life to David to Demonstrate David's Righteousness
  - i. Saul wound up in a very vulnerable position
  - ii. David was tempted to take this opportunity to kill Saul

- iii. Instead, David demonstrated his righteousness to Saul
- b. Always Be Discerning When a Door Opens
  - i. You aren't meant to walk through every open door, even if God opened it
  - ii. Test opportunities against the commands, character, and calling of Christ
- c. Reverence for God May Require Risky Restraint
  - i. David showed risky restraint because of his reverence for God
  - ii. Show godly restraint, but don't be surprised when others don't like or respect it

#### 4. Bible Study:

- a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after the sermon, make time to consider:
  - i. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
  - ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
  - iii. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
  - iv. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
  - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. **Monday:**
  - i. Read 1 Samuel 24 (the focal passage is just verses 1-12, but we will consider the entire chapter to see the outcome of David's actions in the cave.).
  - ii. Use a Bible atlas, encyclopedia, or online search to find pictures of the En-Gedi area so you can visualize the area's geography.
  - iii. Summarize the various events that are reported in this chapter.
    - 1. How would you describe David's situation at the beginning of the chapter (compare verse 2 with 1 Samuel 23:13)?
    - 2. In what ways can we see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter?
      - a. If you were running for your life, would you remain in a cave as your enemy approached? Why or why not?
      - b. How could David and his men, hiding in a cave, have carried on the conversations of verses 4 and 6 without being overheard by Saul?
      - c. What would have been the two possible outcomes if Saul had detected David and his men?
- c. **Tuesday:**
  - i. Read and meditate on 1 Samuel 24:1-7.
  - ii. Why would Saul have felt it appropriate to leave his camp and enter the cave where David was hiding (see Deuteronomy 23:12-14)? Why do you think he left his bodyguard behind?

- iii. Read 1 Samuel 15:26-29, 16:1, and 20:15. Do any of these passages convey the ideas that David's men present to him in verse 4? If not, where did the men likely hear such a proclamation?
- iv. The last sentence in verse 4 tells us "David arose" ("crept up" (NIV) or "got up" (CSB)) after hearing his men.
  - 1. What do you think his men thought he was doing?
  - 2. What other course of action could David have followed?
  - 3. If Saul had detected David's movement, what choice would David have had to make?
- v. Why was David convicted of his act of cutting off a corner of the king's robe? Read 1 Samuel 15:27-28, 18:4, and 1 Kings 11:30-31. What do these verses suggest someone might have seen as a symbolic meaning of David's act? How is the idea of it being a symbolic act reinforced by David's subsequent conviction?
- vi. What explanation does David give for not taking advantage of this opportunity (the "open door") to kill Saul?
  - 1. If David had done as his men wanted, what would he have been guilty of (see Exodus 20:13)?
  - 2. What does this show us about where David was placing his trust and what he knew the outcome would be (compare 1 Samuel 26:9-11)? What can we learn from David's example?

*d. Wednesday:*

- i. Read and meditate on 1 Samuel 24:8-11.
- ii. In what ways did David show his respect for Saul (there are at least four: verses 8,10, and 11)?
- iii. How does David provide Saul with a diplomatic escape route even before presenting the evidence of his good intentions?
- iv. What subtle message is David giving Saul when he explains why he did not kill Saul in the cave? To whom do we, and apparently Saul, know that David's last phrase in verse 10 applies?
- v. Since David is also God's anointed, who is David telling Saul that he is really fighting against at the end of verse 11?

*e. Thursday:*

- i. Read and meditate on 1 Samuel 24:12-15.
- ii. After accusing Saul of attempted murder, where does David turn for support? How does David expect justice to be accomplished?
- iii. Verses 12 and 13 both end with a statement from David that his "hand will not touch" Saul, but the rationale for the statement is different in the two verses.
  - 1. What is David's rationale for not "touching" Saul in verse 12?

2. What is it in verse 13? What is a modern expression that says the same thing as the saying David quotes? What was the authoritative proof that David presented to prove that he was not an evil man?
  - iv. How might the wording of David's first question in verse 14 have suggested to Saul after hearing the proverb? What point is David making by comparing himself to a "dead dog" or a "flea"?
  - v. How does the way David ends his short speech show that he is serious about where he is placing his trust? Besides asking God to judge, what else is David requesting?
- f. **Friday:**
- i. Read and meditate on 1 Samuel 24:16-22.
  - ii. What is Saul's reaction to what David has told and shown him?
  - iii. What is Saul's assessment of David, and the reason that he is in the position of having to admit David spared his life?
  - iv. What is significant about Saul's statement in verse 20?
    1. How does verse 21 demonstrate that Saul really believed what he had said in verse 20?
    2. Why would Saul have felt it necessary to make such a request (see, for example, 2 Kings 11:1 and the account of Jehu becoming King of Israel (2 Kings 9:12-13 and 10:1-17))
    3. Why was it an easy thing for David to agree to Saul's request (see 1 Samuel 20:14-15 & 42)?
  - v. What did Saul not do that we would have expected of him after receiving David's oath?
- g. **Saturday:** 1 Samuel chapters 24, 25 (where David spares Nabal's life), and 26 (where David again spares Saul's life) are often seen as three related tests in David's life with similarity to the three temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness. You may find it beneficial to read all three chapters today and reflect on what lessons are taught by each.

## 5. Application:

- a. There are no shortcuts to accomplish God's will in our lives. If He has determined it is a period during which we should "wait" then wait we must. He will accomplish His will and get us to the point He has planned for us – but He will do it in His time. Opportunities to move forward at our own pace through conveniently open doors may not be the opportunities they seem to be.
- b. There is never a time when breaking God's law is acceptable – no matter what good we think it may accomplish. Murder is murder. Lying is lying. The "end never justifies the means" unless the means are what God decrees – and He will never decree that we break the laws He has given. This should be particularly important to us in post-modern America, where truth is viewed as relative.