



November 16, 2025
A Man After God's Heart
Faithfulness After a Final Failure
2 Samuel 24

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

- a. If you are a parent, have you ever responded, “because I said so” (or an equivalent phrase) when your child demanded to know “why” you had issued a command, established a rule, or set a boundary? When is such a response necessary and appropriate? Can you describe a time when it would have been fruitless to try to give a more detailed explanation in response to the “why” question?
- b. Have you ever had the experience of rejecting the advice of someone you know and trust, only to later learn that they were correct and you should have accepted what they said? What factors caused you to reject the advice? How did you feel and react once you were aware that you had ignored good advice?
- c. When you were a child, did your parents ever let you choose which punishment to accept when you did something wrong (or did you ever do so with your own children)? If so, what was the basis for your choice? Do you feel that this is a fair and effective way to administer discipline?

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: Macaguán of Colombia** (*from the IMB “Loving the Lost Through Prayer” guide.*)

“The Macaguán (mah-cah-GWAHN) of Colombia traditionally live in the Colombian savannas. They are also known as the Hitnü, which means “human beings.” In recent years, they have seen an increase in violence within their tribe, as outsiders have started to rob the Macaguán of their natural resources. The Macaguán look to their shamans for help, believing they have healing powers. These shamans often use hallucinogenic herbs that they believe help them communicate with the spirit world and heal members of the tribe. There are no known Macaguán believers, local churches, Scriptures in their language, or missionaries preaching the good news of Jesus Christ to their tribe. Ask God to send Christians to the Macaguán to learn their language and culture, and share the gospel with them. Pray they will trust in Jesus for help and call on Him for salvation.

3. **Sermon Key Points:**

- a. . David's Last Big Failure Demonstrated Genuine Spiritual Growth and Leadership
 - i. David became more interested in his power than in God's.
 - ii. David recognized and repented of his sin

- iii. God's punishment prepared the way for His Temple
- b. Be Sensitive to God's Conviction About Sin
 - i. We all sin, but how easily do you recognize your sin?
 - ii. Cultivate a heart that's open to the Holy Spirit's conviction
- c. Respond to God's Conviction with Real Repentance Demonstrated by Obedience
 - i. How we respond to God's conviction reveals our spiritual state
 - ii. Cultivate a heart that's quick to repent
 - iii. Demonstrate your repentance through renewed obedience to Christ

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. This week, we complete the series in the Books of Samuel with a final sermon about King David. The primary text is 2 Samuel 24, but the story is also presented in 1 Chronicles 21 with enough additional detail that we will study both chapters together. Begin the week by quickly reading both chapters to see the overall story.
 - ii. As you read this account, what do you find most striking? What questions come to mind? What is the one thing you wish the Bible had explained in more detail?
 - iii. What significant differences, if any, did you see in the two versions of the event? How do such differences make you feel about the trustworthiness of the text?
 - iv. What is one aspect of David's experience that you can apply to your life?
- c. **Tuesday:**
 - i. Read and meditate on 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1.
 - ii. Verse 1 should raise some perplexing questions:
 - 1. Why was God angry with Israel? You might consider this a "trick question" – see Deuteronomy 29:29 for the answer. What does this answer teach us about how we may have to respond to God's dealings with us personally?
 - 2. Who "incited" David to take the census, God or Satan? Compare this verse to Job 1:6-12 & 2:1-7a, Zechariah 3:1, and 2 Corinthians 12:7. What do we learn about God, His sovereignty, and how He, without being responsible for sin and evil, uses them to accomplish His purposes?
 - 3. Why do you think it was wrong (a sin) for David to conduct a census? What were the purpose and rules for conducting a census (see Exodus 30:11-16 and Numbers 3:40-51)? What would differentiate between an approved census and one that was sinful (see Matthew 5:28, Acts 8:22, and Hebrews 4:12)? What practical application is there in this for us today?

- iii. Note: 2 Samuel 24:1, along with a considerable number of similar verses throughout the Bible, should cause us to pause and think carefully about what the Bible teaches concerning the Sovereignty of God in a creation infected by evil. This is sometimes presented as “the problem of evil” – often in an attempt to deny or discredit God. While addressing this topic is beyond the scope of this devotional, there are several key points we should keep in mind throughout the week as we study the passage:
 - 1. God never does anything evil (Isaiah 6:3, 1 Peter 1:15-16) nor can He ever be blamed for evil.
 - 2. God never tempts us to do evil (James 1:13) but in fact is the only One who can deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13).
 - 3. God controls and uses all things, including evil, to accomplish His will – even the vilest of all acts, the murder of His Son (Genesis 50:20, Acts 4:27-28 & 2:23).
 - 4. God always holds us accountable for the sins we commit (Isaiah 66:3-4, Romans 9:17-20)

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read and meditate on 2 Samuel 24:2-9 and 1 Chronicles 21:2-6
- ii. In the ESV, verse 2 says that David told Joab to “number the people,” but the NIV and CSB say they were to count the “troop” (fighting men). Which do you think David was interested in having counted? Does the report that Joab delivered to the king shed light on the answer?
- iii. How would you paraphrase Joab’s response to the king in your own words?
 - 1. Why do you think he objected to the king’s command?
 - 2. What does the last phrase of Joab’s question, “why does the lord the king delight in this thing?” suggest about David’s motives? How has the focus of David’s “delight” seem to have changed from what it was in Psalm 40:8?
- iv. After Joab was overruled by David and sent out to count the fighting men, do you think Joab was sinning to obey? Would your answer have been different if the command had required Joab to break one of the 10 Commandments (as was the case when David had Joab murder Uriah)? How do you think Romans 13:1, Titus 3:1, and 1 Peter 2:13-14 apply?
- v. If you have a good Bible atlas, trace the route Joab and the army commanders took in their 9-month census.
- vi. Why do you think Samuel and Chronicles give different results for the census? Since the Bible does not contain errors, what might explain the difference (hint: see 1 Chronicles 27)? Given the round numbers used to report the census (800,000, etc.), what did Joab obviously do when making his report?

e. Thursday:

- i. Read and meditate on 2 Samuel 24:10-17 and 1 Chronicles 21:7-17.
- ii. Based on what we read in these passages, what seems to have caused David to recognize his sin? How is this similar to David’s response after cutting off a corner of Saul’s robe (see 1 Samuel 24:5)?
- iii. Why do you think it took over 9 months for David to recognize his sin?

- iv. How is this confession event in David's life different from when he confessed his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Samuel 12:13)? Which sin do his confessions suggest he considered to be more serious? Why do you think he may have felt this way? What do you think it says about David that this time he confessed before being confronted by someone else?
- v. How do the three punishments God offer David compare to those God promised through Moses for breaking the covenant He had established with Israel (see Leviticus 26:21-26 and Deuteronomy 28, especially verses 21, 25, and 38)? What does this suggest as a possible explanation for why God was angry with Israel (verse 1)?
- vi. What does David answer in 2 Samuel 24:14 tell you about David? What additional insight about David do you see in his confession in 24:17?
- vii. Where did the plague end? Who were the Jebusites (Joshua 15:63, Judges 1:21, and 2 Samuel 5:5-7)?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read and meditate on 2 Samuel 24:18-28 and 1 Chronicles 21:17-26.
- ii. How does God answer David's prayer (2 Samuel 24:17)? How does David respond to God's command given by Gad?
- iii. Why are the events in this passage necessary to wrap up this story (see Leviticus 15:22-29 and Hebrews 9:22)? In what ways do you see this as being symbolic of what the Son of David would do for us?
- iv. What does it say about Araunah that he would offer David not only the threshing floor but also his oxen and threshing sledges? What does it say about David that he insisted on paying?
- v. How did God show that He had accepted David's offering (especially 1 Chronicles 21:26)?
- vi. Why is Araunah's threshing floor particularly significant in the history of Israel (see 1 Chronicles 22:1)?

g. **Saturday:**

- i. End the week by rereading 2 Samuel 24.
- ii. In what ways does this final chapter of 2 Samuel demonstrate God's sovereignty at work even through man's sinful actions?
- iii. What lessons do you see in this chapter that should be applied in your life?

5. **Application:**

- a. Beware of pride. When everything is going well in your life, it is too easy for pride to take the place of acknowledging God's gifts. Although pride is not always a sin (2 Corinthians 7:4 & 12:5 & 9), most often it is (Romans 1:30, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, and Proverbs 21:4). David allowed his actions to be dictated by pride in calling for the census, and it became a great sin with terrible consequences.
- b. Sin must be recognized and confessed. God has given us a conscience and, more importantly, the Holy Spirit to show us our sin, but it is far too easy to muffle both. We must train ourselves to hear by spending time meditating on the Scriptures and in prayer. And then when a sin is revealed we must truly repent (turn away) and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in the way we should go.