

**All the Days of My Life**

1 Samuel 21-26

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Introduction: First Samuel is clear that God has chosen David over Saul, but chapters 21-26 indicate that neither David nor Saul have fully worked this out. Saul pursues David as if he has a chance to rid himself of his rival, and David flees from Saul as if he himself could die at any moment. Chapters 21-22 portray David on the run, preserving his life by acquiring food and weaponry (21:1-9), feigning insanity (21:10-15), and gaining a following (22:1-2); while Saul pursues David and kills those who offer him support (22:6-19). Significantly, David inquires of the Lord on multiple occasions (23:2, 10) and though Saul discovers David's whereabouts (23:7, 19), the Lord protects David from harm (23:14, 26-28). On two separate occasions, David has the opportunity to take Saul's life (chapters 24, 26), but he refrains from doing so out of respect for the Lord (24:6; 26:11). David's actions throughout this section show that the longer he lives, the more he depends upon the Lord.

01. The longer we live without the Lord, the more consequences of sin we shall bear.

02. The longer we live for the Lord, the more appreciative we are on the means of grace.

03. The longer we live for the Lord, the more we long to live righteously before God and others.

04. The longer we live for the Lord, the more indebted are we to those who speak life to us.

The Lord is My Shepherd
[a study through 1 samuel]

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & DISCOVERY

1. What do you make of the fact that David's attempts to preserve his life are motivated by fear of man? Do you find it surprising that a person with his background of trusting the Lord finds himself depending on his own resourcefulness rather than the Lord? Have you experienced similar occasions when you know that you should trust the Lord, but begin to believe you can take care of yourself just as well?

2. Compare 1 Samuel 21:1-6 with Matthew 12:1-14. How does Jesus use the episode of David and the consecrated bread to illustrate the danger of a legalistic understanding of God's law? In what ways do we need to apply such truths today? In what ways might we go too far in the area of compassion and thus miss the point of God's commands altogether?

3. Note the kinds of people that gathered around David in 24:2. What does it suggest about David when these people are attracted to and transformed by his leadership? How does this "motley crew" resemble the twelve that Jesus called to be His disciples?

4. David blamed himself for the murder of the eighty-five priests, even though Saul gave the order and Doeg carried out the command (1 Samuel 22:17-22). What is the proper balance between owning up to the consequences of our actions and understanding that we are not entirely responsible for the actions of others? What hope does the Bible give for those who bear tremendous guilt for their past decisions?

5. 1 Samuel 23 describes how the Lord delivered David through direct communication (verses 1-5) and through special circumstance (verses 26-29). How would you articulate the relationship between prayer and providence? Do you tend to see more providences as you pray?

6. David's preservation of Saul is all the more remarkable because he had opportunity, motive, and encouragement to take Saul's life instead. How difficult is it to trust in the Lord and His timing when taking matters into our own hands is otherwise acceptable to others and likely easier on ourselves? Read Psalm 57 for further encouragement.

For Further Reading: Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*. InterVarsity Press, 2000; 20th Anniversary Edition.

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