



BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2025 – WEEK 4

THE BEST LAID SCHEMES OF MICE AND MEN

*There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.*

– Proverbs 16:24 ESV

- **The pitiful plans of man**

*The best laid schemes of mice and men go often askew,
And leaves nothing but grief and pain,
For promised joy! – Robert Burns, To A Mouse*

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. – Proverbs 16:9 ESV

*There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death. – Proverbs 14:12 ESV*

- David has made some dicey decisions
 - His flight to Nob – 1 Samuel 20:1-9; 22:6-23
 - Required deception
 - Resulted in death
 - His escape to Gath – 1 Samuel 21:10-15
 - Demonstrated desperation
 - Damaged his reputation
 - His concealment in Ziph – 1 Samuel 23:15-24
 - Motivated by fear
 - Marked by betrayal
 - His move to Maac – 1 Samuel 23:24-29
 - Failed to escape Saul
 - So God sent a distraction for Saul
 - His relocation to Paran – 1 Samuel 25:1-38
 - Offended by a fool

- Provoked to do something foolish
- Protected by a wise woman

- **Best lame plans**

- David was great at making plans
- But not at seeking Yahweh's advice
- He allowed his emotions to control him

Then David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines. – 1 Samuel 27:1 ESV

- Here we go again!
 - David decides to return to Gath
 - His rationale?

"Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand." – 1 Samuel 27:1 ESV

- He doesn't seek God's will
- He's lost hope in God's sovereignty
- He's focused on death, not deliverance
- He assumes the worst
- Saul has become the "giant" in his life

- **Short-sighted faith**

- David took his eyes off of Yahweh
 - God may have **anointed** him...
 - But he was **appointed** for death
- What happened to...*"The battle is the LORD's!?"*
- David applied human reasoning

***"The best thing I can do is escape to the Philistines."** – 1 Samuel 27:1 NLT*

- His decision sounded **logical**
- But it was extremely **irrational**

***There is a way that seems right to a man...**
but its end is the way to death. – Proverbs 14:12 ESV*

- David gets a warm reception
 - The Philistines give him a town
 - His plan seems to be a success

...when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him. – 1 Samuel 27:4 ESV

- Success can be **deceiving**
- It isn't a **guarantee** of God's blessing
- David relied upon human ingenuity
 - He utilized **deceit** and **duplicity**
 - Rather than **faith** and **dependence**

Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive. – Sir Walter Scott, *Marmion*

Now David and his men went up and made raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites...And David would strike the land and would leave neither man nor woman alive, but would take away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the garments, and come back to Achish. – 1 Samuel 27:8, 9 ESV

- Dead men tell no tales
 - No witnesses were left alive
 - The truth was inconvenient and risky
 - So David resorted to a lie

The lie: "I'm fighting for the Philistines!"

The truth: "I'm fighting for Israel"

- Achish bought the lie

Achish trusted David, thinking, "He has made himself an utter stench to his people Israel; therefore he shall always be my servant." – 1 Samuel 27:12 ESV

- But lies eventually get exposed
- David would learn to despise deceit

*No one who practices deceit
shall dwell in my house;
no one who utters lies
shall continue before my eyes. – Psalm 101:7 ESV*

- **The sad state of self-reliance**

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. – Isaiah 5:21 BSB

Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. – Proverbs 26:12 BSB

- A nightmare in the making – Chapter 29
 - The moment of truth arrives
 - Philistia and Israel go to war
 - David is in a predicament
 - Achish sees David as an ally
 - His commanders see him as a threat
 - God graciously intercedes
 - David and his men return to Ziklag

Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negeb and against Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. – 1 Samuel 30:1-2 ESV

- **Poor choices – bad outcomes**

- His life of deception had consequences
 - He had been attacking Amalekites
 - Now they had returned the favor
 - David lost everything
 - The city that had become his refuge
 - His two wives
 - The allegiance and love of his men
 - And he almost lost his life

But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. – 1 Samuel 30:6 ESV

- He sought God's input
- He received God's direction
- He witnessed God's victory

David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back all. – 1 Samuel 30:18-19 ESV

strengthened himself – ***hāzaq*** – to seek encouragement from or find courage in someone or something

- David didn't rely on human reason
- He turned to God

*Wait for the LORD;
be strong [hāzaq], and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD! – Psalm 27:14 ESV*

*Be strong [hāzaq], and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the LORD! – Psalm 31:24 ESV*

- **Meanwhile, Saul... – 1 Samuel 28**
 - Samuel, the prophet, was dead
 - The Spirit of God had left Saul
 - War with the Philistines was imminent
 - In his fear, Saul sought the LORD
 - But the LORD refused to answer
 - So, Saul improvised

Then Saul said to his servants, “Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “Behold, there is a medium at Endor.” – 1 Samuel 28:7 ESV

- What’s wrong with this picture?
 - Saul was seeking God’s input outside of God’s revealed will
 - Mediums practiced necromancy
 - And they were outlawed by God

*“If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against **that person and will cut him off from among his people.**” – Leviticus 20:6 ESV*

*“There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or **one who inquires of the dead**, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD.” – Deuteronomy 18:10-12 ESV*

- Everything about this is wrong
 - Saul consults with a witch...
 - ...to call up the dead prophet Samuel
 - ...to coerce God to give him an answer
 - ...and rescue him from his predicament
 - God gives Saul what he wants
 - ~ The witch is able to conjure up Samuel
 - ~ Samuel confronts Saul
 - ~ Saul conveys his request

*"I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to **tell me what I shall do.**" – 1 Samuel 28:15 ESV*

- Samuel's response:
"...the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy...the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me." – 1 Samuel 28:17, 19 ESV

- ~ The dead prophet predicts Saul's death
 - ≈ God reveals his will in an unlikely way
 - ≈ He used Saul's **disobedience** to divulge his plan for Saul's **discipline**

Now the Philistines attacked Israel, and the men of Israel fled before them. Many were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. The Philistines closed in on Saul and his sons, and they killed three of his sons... – 1 Samuel 31:1-2 NLT

So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When his armor bearer realized that Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died beside the king. So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and his troops all died together that same day. – 1 Samuel 31:4-6 NLT

- **The irrepressible will of God**

- Saul got what he **deserved**
"The LORD has done this to you today because you refused to carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites." – 1 Samuel 28:18 NLT
- David got what was **undeserved**
David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives. Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor anything else that had been taken. David brought everything back. – 1 Samuel 28:18 NLT

*"Saul was done, but God was not. Israel was down, but not out. Their best days were ahead of them. The king they wanted was dead but the king they needed was alive, well, and closer than they could have ever imagined. And it was all part of God's perfect plan."
– Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on the Life of David**

- **Discussion Questions**

How did God speak to you through today's lesson? What was your big takeaway?

Both David and Saul were quick to make questionable decisions. Why do you think David's poor choices tended to have better outcomes than Saul's? What's the key?

How should Proverbs 14:12 change our approach to decision-making? Why is human reasoning an unreliable alternative to God?



BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2025 – WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

WEEK 5 – A King Without a Kingdom

As 2 Samuel opens, David is mourning the deaths of Saul and Solomon. These passages reveal a lot about David's designation by God as a man after His own heart. Despite all that Saul had done to him, David never lost his love and respect for the man and the title he held as king. In this lesson, we want to emphasize David's desire to love what God loves and honor the things that God holds dear. While Saul had earned his demise because of his blatant disregard for God's commands, he had still been the anointed king of Israel until God said otherwise.

PASSAGE: 2 Samuel 1:1-5:16

DEVOTIONARY™: Pages 159-206

- If you read one section of the Devotional™ each day, it should take you about 10 minutes. Don't try to read it all in one sitting. As you read, jot down any thoughts that stand out.

- Saul is dead, and the path is now open for David to ascend to the throne. After more than a decade of living like a fugitive, what do you think David's response to Saul's death would have been?

Now read 2 Samuel 1 and write down how David reacted to the news of Saul and Jonathan's deaths. What stands out about his response?

What can you learn about the changes God has made in David's heart based on his lament in verses 17-27?

- Just when you think David should have a clear path to the throne, what happens in Chapter 2 to muddy the waters?

Why do you think God allowed these things to happen if His will was for David to be the next king?

- Chapter 3 reveals a hint of intrigue unfolding. Describe what happens and what you believe to be the significance of Abner's actions?

How do the actions of Joab in verses 26-30 muddy the water further for David?

What does David's response to Abner's death reveal about him?

- How do the events in Chapter 4 support the doctrinal concept of God's sovereignty? How do you see His complete control over all that happens in this chapter?

Look closely at verses 5-12. What does David's response to Ish-bosheth's death reveal about David's heart?

- In Chapter 5, David finally gets the "appointing" to go along with his earlier "anointing" by Samuel. What are the positive things you see in verses 1-16?

What are some negative things that might foreshadow a less-than-ideal future for David?