



## Honest to God

David: Profiles of an Authentic Life

### Session 10 – Authentic Forgiveness

“Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea—until, of course, they have something to forgive.”  
—C.S. Lewis

David was approaching sixty years old. His days of soldiering and wars and sleeping outside under wilderness stars were behind him, or so he thought. He’s at the point in time when you might expect a little peace, but that eludes him. There is trouble at home, family turmoil that is the product of his own making. Outwardly, life moved from one crisis point to the next. But David recognizes God is with him. He is still the king, a man after God’s own heart.

#### Goals for this Session:

- Discover how David responded to rebellion and rejection.
- Consider why forgiven people must be forgiving people.
- To examine how we respond to unjust and unkind treatment.
- To pray honest prayers that cultivates humility and freely forgives.

#### Ice Breaker

What’s your preferred language of apology?

A card...a gift...flowers...wash the dishes without being asked...none...I never need to apologize.

#### Day One – The Big Picture

Read **2 Samuel 16:1–14 and 19:15–30** to get the overall picture. Follow the story line closely but without getting bogged down in details.

1. What is the central topic? State the main point of this passage in a sentence or two.
2. What insight does this chapter give you into God’s ways and our relationship to Him?
3. The Bible shapes our core beliefs about God and our conduct toward others. Share one takeaway lesson from this chapter and how you can apply it to your life.

## Day Two – Dark Days Ahead

### Read 2 Samuel 16:1–14.

Absalom was a shrewd man. His scheme to oust his father and make himself king is detailed in chapter fifteen. Within four years, Absalom was in a position to stage a full-scale rebellion. When David learned what Absalom was doing, he took immediate action to protect his family and avoid innocent slaughter of Jerusalem's citizens. The encounters with Ziba and Shimei occurred when David was fleeing Jerusalem.

1. Consider David's state of mind during this evacuation. From the narrative and psalms that David wrote during this time, we get a sense of what he must have experienced. Briefly note some of what he was dealing with and how he prayed.

2 Samuel 15:23–31

Psalms 41:4–5

Psalms 55:12–18, 22

2. Ziba had been Saul's land manager and he maintained control after Saul's death. Until David searched for an heir and gave the land to Mephibosheth, it appears that Ziba had operated as de facto owner, even though he knew where Jonathan's son lived. When Ziba showed up with gifts, David questioned Mephibosheth's absence. What factors may have clouded David's judgment to take Ziba's explanation at face value?

- a. Put yourself in David's shoes. Have you ever been quick to react to a person or situation and regretted it later? What would be a wiser response?

Proverbs 18:13, 17

1 Corinthians 13:7

3. There will always be "Zibas" in life. By that, we mean the natural tendency to self-promote or put our own interests above (or at the expense of) others. What is God's desire for us?

1 Corinthians 13:4–5

Philippians 2:3–4

4. David's route took him through Bahurim, a town where pro-Saul forces were still strong. Describe David's encounter with Shimei.
- a. What stuns or stands out to you most about Shimei?
  - b. Why didn't David retaliate or respond to Shimei's attack? What does David's response reveal about his understanding of God?
  - c. Put yourself in David's shoes. Have you ever been on the receiving end of angry or mean-spirited treatment? If you had it to do over, would you change anything about your response? Why or why not?
5. There will always be "Shimeis" in life. By that, we mean encounters with viral behavior that demeans and demoralizes. Our natural tendency is to retaliate or let our own flesh rise when we've been maligned or shamefully treated. How do we respond in a God-honoring way?

Romans 12:17–19

Psalm 4:3–5

James 1:19–20

### **Memory Verse**

Write the verse and let it be part of your prayers every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to work it into your heart and mind.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!  
Psalm 32:1 NLT

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### **Think it over . . .**

Every sin I bring out in the open, God will pardon and put out of sight.  
When others are quick to remind me of my sin, Lord remind me of Your joy.

## Day Three – Let it Go

### Read 2 Samuel 19:15–23.

Shimei thought he had seen the last of King David when he fled Jerusalem. Now Shimei is first in line to repent.

1. Shimei was out of line for cursing\* David (Exodus 22:28). Truth be told, he knew it while he was doing it—but David was vulnerable and it was easy to vent his anger and throw rocks from a distance. Today, he could have used social media instead of rocks. David’s response sets a positive example for us, but what can we learn from Shimei?

Proverbs 29:11

James 1:26

Colossians 3:8

2. As King David returns and crosses the Jordan, Shimei is there to meet him and ask for pardon. As you read this account, what evidence of a genuine apology do you see?
  - a. In your observation, what motivated Shimei to apologize?
  - b. Abishai still insisted that Shimei should be put to death, but David spared his life again. For Abishai, it was a matter of honor but David saw the big picture. This was a day for mending fences, not settling scores. Put yourself in David’s shoes. What would you do in a similar situation? What can we learn from David?
  - c. David told Shimei, “You shall not die.” In the Hebrew text, these are the same words Nathan said to David (2 Samuel 12:13). What did David see this as an opportunity to do?

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\* In the Hebrew text, *cursing* was more than obnoxious behavior; it expressed subversive intent with a desire for misfortune and great harm to come upon the one cursed.

David kept his word and Shimei was given a reprieve. After David's death, Solomon put Shimei under house arrest for his crime. He openly violated the terms of his agreement with Solomon and this time, he was executed (1 Kings 2:36–46).

3. Which of the following statements are true: (Check all that apply)

- a. Forgiveness requires an apology first. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Forgiveness removes the consequences of sinful choices. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Without forgiveness, relationships begin to die. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Forgiveness gives up the right to retaliate, but doesn't condone sinful behavior. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Add your own thought to the list \_\_\_\_\_

### Memory Verse

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!  
Psalm 32:1 NLT

### *Think it over . . .*

I need to apologize to \_\_\_\_\_ and ask their forgiveness for \_\_\_\_\_

### Day Four – Choosing Forgiveness

#### **Read 2 Samuel 19:24–30.**

Ziba showed up to help David and his family cross the Jordan on their way back to Jerusalem, but there is no indication that he brought Mephibosheth with him. But the disabled prince was determined to see David personally.

1. So much had changed since the last time David had seen Jonathan's son. What had David believed about Mephibosheth? Briefly describe their meeting.
  - a. After hearing Mephibosheth's side of the story, David restores a portion of Saul's estate back to him. Judging from his response, what was most important to Jonathan's son?

2. Ziba dealt falsely with Mephibosheth and it appears that David, with little time to sort it out, tried to find a quick and equitable solution to the matter. Mephibosheth's humble response reminds us of Hannah's. When you find yourself on the receiving end of false accusations or someone's jump-to-conclusion, what is your natural response? What would you like it to be?
3. Forgiveness is easier said than done. When we are on the receiving end of an offense, our nature reacts. If the offense is slight, we may only be annoyed ("they should know better"). But if the offense is wounding, it requires more prayer and forbearance to process it rightly without piling more sin onto the situation.

God's Word is always the wisest counsel in these matters. As believers, we are to restore (help to mend or put right) one caught in sin *humbly aware* of our own propensity to sin (Galatians 6:1). How? By approaching the situation in a spirit of gentleness. A gentle spirit is a virtue that stands between two extreme responses: uncontrolled, unjustified anger—or—not caring enough about truth to be angry at all.

Put yourself in Mephibosheth's spot. He was on the receiving end of Ziba's overt sin and David's unintentional offense. How was he able to navigate through that painful situation without making it worse?

**"Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars. You have to let go at some point in order to move forward."**

**C.S. Lewis**

4. It's been said that holding a grudge doesn't make you stronger, it makes you bitter. And forgiving doesn't make you weak, it sets you free. Mephibosheth seems to have understood and practiced that. Maybe you can relate to Mephibosheth's experience. In what way?

### **Memory Verse**

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!  
Psalm 32:1 NLT

### **Think it over . . .**

When I say I forgive you, do I throw that sin away or tuck it away to dwell on later?

## Day Five – Spread the Joy

### Memory Verse

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!  
Psalm 32:1 NLT

### *Think it over . . .*

Who needs to know their sins can be traded in for joy and forgiveness? Who will I tell today?

### After His Heart

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.” —2 Chronicles 16:9 NLT

**“God found in David a man who would stand in the gap, a man whose heart was fully committed to Him. Will He find that in you?”**

**Greg Laurie**

For you personally, what has been the most important discovery or insight from this study?

How will you put living it into practice in the days ahead?

Prayer Requests

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