

A Study of 1 & 2 Kings

TRUSTWORTHY

OVERCOMING OUR GREATEST
STRUGGLES TO TRUST GOD



LYSA TERKEURST

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MEET THE AUTHOR

Lysa TerKeurst is passionate about God's Word. She spends hours each week studying with theological experts and has studied extensively in the Holy Land. She loves to make connections between the Old and New Testaments. Her deepest desire is to help others experience Jesus by unpacking Scripture in the most true and responsible ways that everyone can understand.

Lysa is the president of Proverbs 31 Ministries and a #1 *New York Times* best-selling author of *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, *Uninvited*, and twenty-one other books. But to those who know her best she's just a simple girl who holds fast to God's truth and speaks about hope in the midst of her own struggles. Lysa lives with her family in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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INTRODUCTION

I stood in front of the busted up walls amazed by all I never knew was behind them. Wires. Pipes. Support beams. Insulation. It all stood out now so very vulnerable and exposed. I ran my hand along the rough reality of renovation and thought how very similar my heart felt at the moment. The only difference was I knew my house would be put back together, better than ever.

I wasn't so sure about my heart.

With the house, I knew a basic time frame. I also knew enough about renovations to add a few months of buffer time to the end date. Regardless, I absolutely knew there would be a beginning to this project and there would be an ending to this project. I also knew the end result would be beautiful. And since I knew the basic time frame and how beautiful things would eventually be, the busting up part of the renovation didn't bother me. I was actually happy that demolition occurred.

The demolition was not a sign of irreparable problems. It was a sign of intentional progress. But I couldn't say the same about the busted up places of my heart. Not right now. Not yet.

When I stood and looked in the mirror, my demolished heart wasn't quite as easy to see as the walls in my house. The brokenness certainly revealed things, but they weren't as easy to identify as pipes and wires. They were strange threads of fear, anxiety, shock, trauma, and distrust.

Distrust. There it was. The biggest of all the issues that resided beneath my surface. The ripping open and exposing of my heart had certainly revealed something I needed to see but didn't dare want to admit.

About me. About God. And about my utter lack of trust in Him.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm a Jesus girl through and through. I love studying His Word, doing the right and required things, following Him, and fulfilling my calling. Yes, yes, sign me up for all of that.

But when God starts to deviate from the plan I'm assuming my life should follow, I'm much more apt to want to tame God, not trust Him.

And then when a busting up of all that felt safe and secure happens without any assurance of a completion date and a vision of the exact good that will surely come from this—well, that's when I slide my raised hand down and I quit volunteering so eagerly to follow hard after God. That's when I kick into high gear resisting God's plans, making suggestions of how to do this whole thing better, and start pulling away from trusting God and pressing in to my ways, my timing, and my assumed better plan.

I demand the builder hand over the tools, and though I have *no clue* how to truly make things better, I start patching and covering and frantically fixating on a hodgepodge repair that will be disappointing at best, detrimental at worst.

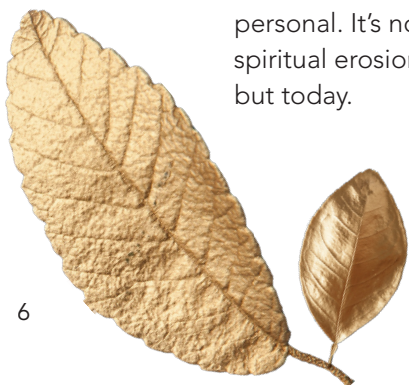
I see this so clearly in my house renovations and have no desire at all to displace the master builder.

I just wish I could have this same clarity in my trust of God.

At the risk of exposing too much of my absolute flesh tendencies, I'm going to peel back a protective layer of my soul. I absolutely want to trust God. And I'm good with declaring my trust of Him. But declaring faith is not the same as walking out an absolute dependence on God to be God. That's where I want to build altars of my own solutions and run to fixing things my way rather than fixing my eyes on the Lord and actually trusting Him.

In both cases I'm worshiping. But worshiping my desires over worshiping God Himself is not an altar that honors God. Quite the opposite.

In biblical times, there were patterns around God's people building high places, which at first can seem like "something foolish those people did." But what I just described that I do—worship solutions and plans of my own making—makes this personal. It's not just an issue to study about them. It's a significant spiritual erosion that must be addressed in my soul—not one day but today.





But understand, addressing this isn't because God is disappointed in me. He's actually appointing this time for me to understand the depth of His love for me like never before.

That's why I can't think of two more perfect books of the Bible to dust off and dig into than 1 and 2 Kings. What appears from the outside looking in as ancient text about long-ago leaders with faith-faulty hearts isn't so far removed from addressing the exact issues I need to examine in my own life.

As I've dared to read these books from the vantage point of needing the truth treasures buried inside of them, I've been astonished at how much application there is for a girl who loves God but finds herself resisting Him in ways that are way more dangerous than I've ever cared to admit before.

And I wonder why I find myself so very exhausted and anxious and heavily burdened on the inside while singing and quoting verses about the abundant Christian life on the outside.

There is a disconnect somewhere between the faith I want and the one I'm living.

I know you feel it too. I've seen it in your tear-filled eyes, and I've heard it in your questions around the harder things to understand about God.

So, let's create a safe place to acknowledge our distrust and discover how God will give us relief for our places of unbelief. Together, we will find a more grounded faith, renovated hearts, and a strengthened trust in God like never before.



ABOUT THIS STUDY

In this study we will spend time with some people who may be familiar to you, but more than likely, we will meet a few royal men whom we previously didn't know all too well. As we study the lives of several Old Testament kings, we will learn together from their mistakes, misplaced affections, and successes.

We'll dive deep into the lives of a few kings from the pages of the Old Testament. A few things you will want to know:

- The first video session is an introduction to the series.
- Then, each week in your personal study time you will study one, or sometimes a few, kings from the Books of 1 and 2 Kings.
- In the video following your week of study, I'll unpack a little more about the kings you just studied that week.

This was an intentional format because I want you to study the stories of the kings for yourself and dig into Scripture on your own about each one before I give you my thoughts on the subject.

For the sake of clarity, I'm teaching from the English Standard Version in this study. If you're using another version of the Bible, it might be helpful to also look at the ESV on your computer or mobile device.

You will have five days of personal study each week.

During the study, we will be looking closely at the lives of several of the kings found in the Old Testament. We won't be covering every single king in depth. At the beginning of each session, you'll see a chart of all the kings with a little bit of background on the king we're studying next. This will help you to connect the kings in your mind and get an idea of the context each one is entering into. We've also provided a reading plan in the back of the book that will take you through the entire Books of 1 and 2 Kings if you'd like to know more and get the full story of the history of God's people.

My prayer for you in this study is that you will discover that God alone is worthy of our trust and worthy to rule our hearts. I'm praying that together we'll overcome our doubts about who He is so that we can rest in Him. I'm so grateful to be taking this journey with you.

VIDEO GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After watching the video, discuss the following questions in your group.

- In the video, Lysa said, "When God starts to deviate from the plan I'm assuming my life should follow, I'm much more apt to want to tame God, not trust Him." How does this speak to you?
- As we learn more about 1 and 2 Kings, remember, we're not just studying history but intentionally looking for how these books apply to us personally. Is there an area in your life where trusting God seems complicated?
- It's easy to declare that we trust God, but what does it really look like to walk out a life of faith?
- How would you explain the Israelites' distrust of the Lord when He did not fail them or betray them?
- How does our lack of patience add to our distrust of God and others?
- What will it take for us to have more trust in the Lord? How can we encourage one another in this?



Saul,
David,
and Solomon

WEEK 1

TRUST IN HIM AT ALL
TIMES, O PEOPLE;
POUR OUT YOUR HEART
BEFORE HIM;
GOD IS A REFUGE
FOR US. SELAH

PSALM 62:8

#TRUSTWORTHYSTUDY



WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION

First of all, can I admit something to you? The Books of 1 and 2 Kings have never been high on my list of priorities to study. It's not that I don't find the history of what happened to the Israelite people interesting. Quite the opposite actually. Since traveling to Israel many times to study, I'm more interested in their history than ever. I guess I've been hesitant because of six reasons. Maybe you can relate.

1. I've never been a king. I'll never be a king. So why would I want to examine the lives of kings?
2. And since these are ancient kings, even if they have life lessons to learn from, will those lessons apply to me in my life today?
3. These books of the Bible feel confusing. There are a lot of kings. There's an eventual split within the kingdom of Israel, which makes the number of kings even greater. There's a host of prophets that make the number of people involved even greater.
4. And let's be honest, I've never heard of many of these people, so it can feel a bit intimidating.
5. The repeated pattern of the disobedience of the kings can seriously get on my nerves and feel exhausting.
6. I need someone to lead me through this and help me make sense of all of this.

Here's the good news: I decided to jump knee-deep into this study and see if I could lead people through it. Do you know what I discovered? I'm completely fascinated by these books now. I've learned lessons I needed more than I ever realized. And I'm so very humbled by how much I not only relate to these kings

but how much my heart needed to soak in the deeper human angst of learning how very trustworthy God is.

I do want to assure you—we're studying lessons from the Books of 1 and 2 Kings. But you'll notice we'll also be in some other books of the Bible that will help us get the greater historical context of these events.

You probably already noticed in the first video that we went all the way back to Genesis and talked about the importance of Deuteronomy 17 and other Scriptures throughout the Bible. You'll also notice cross-references to 1 and 2 Chronicles, which give us a different perspective of the events that take place in 1 and 2 Kings. We'll refer to various proverbs and psalms, too, that originated in the times of the kings or were written by some of these very kings. We'll even jump forward into the New Testament to see how passages in the Old Testament are crucially tied to the development of what takes place. Ultimately, the experiences of the Israelites being led by these imperfect human kings helps us see more clearly our need for the one true, perfect, and righteous King, Jesus.

I say all of this to help give you a bigger context for studying 1 and 2 Kings.

One last note to alleviate any confusion as you start Day 1. You'll see the verses we start with are from 1 Samuel (not 1 Kings). That's because the anointing of the first king happens before the Books of 1 and 2 Kings begin. And I'll be using the ESV (English Standard Version) of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.



King SAUL

Note: If you haven't read the Week 1 Introduction, please do so first.

On paper, everything seemed to make perfect sense. There was an opportunity I'd wanted for a long time. In my best estimation, this seemed to line up perfectly with my ministry, my calling, and my desires. The only problem was the deep-down knowing it wasn't my assignment. I'd asked God for this opportunity, but then I'd worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure I'd get it. This opportunity was the product of my trying really hard, not truly trusting God. And I felt the weight of all my hustle. I was anxious, exhausted, and weighed down by an emotion I couldn't quite understand—dread. It had felt so right. It had seemed like such a good fit. It made perfect sense when I'd said yes. But the closer the due date came for this opportunity, the more regret I felt. Instead of running in the freedom of being assured that God had called me to this so He'd definitely lead me through it, I felt like I was pushing a boulder uphill.

There is a weight to our every want.

And when God says no or not yet, it's often because He can see what the weight of this want will do to us. Make no mistake, we will eventually realize what our choices outside of God's will cost us.

Now, buckle your seatbelt; we're about to get into some theology. Don't get overwhelmed, just lean in and take from this what is helpful to you. My goal is to make something complex simple. When we say, "God's will," we are fully acknowledging God's "sovereign will," but we are dealing with "will of command" here.

When we talk about God's will, that phraseology is layered with meaning. There's an obvious mystery there that will never be fully understood by the human mind.

But for the sake of correctly defining what is meant by God's will in this study, consider the definitions below.

God's Sovereign Will—When we talk about God's sovereign will (Gen. 50:20; Matt. 11:25-26; Acts 2:23; Rom. 9:18-19; Eph. 1:11), we mean that, regardless of the situation or circumstance, God's sovereignty is supreme and human history is under His authority. In all honesty, some parts of God's sovereign will are a mystery to us. This is where we need to return to the character and nature of God. Because God is good, we can trust His sovereign will to be good (Rom. 8:28).¹

Will of Command—When we talk about God's will of command (Matt. 7:21; Eph. 5:17; John 4:34), we are talking about God's precepts or commands He has made known to us primarily through His Word. Theologian Wayne Grudem is helpful in saying, "Because God's revealed will usually contains his commands or 'precepts' for our moral conduct, God's revealed will is sometimes also called God's will of precept or will of command. This revealed will of God is God's declared will concerning what we *should* do or what God *commands* us to do."²

God has expectations for how humanity, whom He created in His image, is to live and act. Yet, sadly, humanity is prone to wander, and this is the repetitive story we see throughout Scripture. However, even in the midst of our disobedience and wandering, God's sovereign will brings unity and authority to these events, making them subject to Him.

THERE IS A
WEIGHT TO
OUR EVERY
WANT.



Using the information and the Scriptures cited above, define "sovereign will" and "will of command" in your own words.

God's sovereign will provides a foundational security. But His will of command offers only possibility.

So how do we tie these two together? God is in control. But He doesn't control our choices. God has given responsibility to humans to choose Him, His way, and His best.

OUR OBEDIENCE
TO GOD'S WILL
OF COMMAND
IS ACTUALLY AN
INDICATION OF
WHETHER OR NOT
WE TRUST HIM.



When we use the term “God’s will” in this study, we are primarily referring to God’s will of command as it relates to the kings and the people of Israel.

Like I said earlier, we will eventually realize what our choices outside of God’s will cost us. And that moment of realization leads us right back to what God tried to tell us before we ever made those choices. There isn’t ever a time when God has been wrong.

Not ever. And how gracious of God to be patient with us as we learn that lesson over and over. God is trustworthy. Our obedience to God’s will of command is actually an indication of whether or not we trust Him.

Let’s take a look at how the tension between obedience and trust played out with God’s people and the first king to rule over them—Saul.

Saul certainly looked the part of a king. Read 1 Samuel 9:2 and record his external qualities.

Consider 1 Samuel 10:17-19. What are they losing by rejecting God and choosing a human king?

Read 1 Samuel 8:11 and compare it with 1 Samuel 11:5-8. As you read 1 Samuel 11:5-8, notice the anger within Saul that was greatly kindled and the severity of his reaction. How does 1 Samuel 11 fulfill what God said would happen in 1 Samuel 8?

God warned them that human kings would be harsh and would send them into battle.

Sometimes when we read examples in Scripture of God saying, “don’t do this,” we only hear that God is being so restrictive.

How might the example in the last question help you better understand other Scriptures where God is saying “no” as a protection woven into the restriction? Write a verse or example from the Bible that initially felt too restrictive, but you can now see as a protection.

How could understanding this deepen your trust in God?

We have to be careful of viewing God’s restrictions in our lives as God being unfair or cruel, because this can lead us to question God’s goodness. However, when our perspective changes and we see God’s restrictions as evidence of His protection, we see God’s goodness and care. This truth brings us to a realization that His restrictions are truly a grace given to us.

Read 1 Samuel 12:8-12 and fill in the chart below.

Circumstances that caused the people to cry out	Those whom God appointed as leader(s)	The results of their leadership

What did Samuel say was required of the people and king of Israel in 1 Samuel 12:14-15?

Read 1 Samuel 12:16-19. What was the weight of the want of a king for the people of Israel?

Saul had just won a battle and been confirmed king (1 Sam. 11), which should have been a time of celebration. But the prophet Samuel saw something the people were slow to perceive: they exchanged God's best for the weight of their own choice.

Where have you exchanged God's best for something you wanted?

THEY EXCHANGED
GOD'S BEST FOR
THE WEIGHT
OF THEIR OWN
CHOICE.

As a result, in addition to obeying God, they would also be held accountable for the choices of a king they would not be able to control. When this king went astray, the people would suffer.



Read 1 Samuel 13:8-14. What was Saul afraid of, and how did this fear result in distrust of God?

How did Saul take things into his own hands? What were the consequences of this choice? (See 1 Sam. 15:27-28.)

Because of Saul's disobedience, God found another king who was better than Saul to lead His people. This king was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), and his throne would be established forever (2 Sam. 7:16).

King DAVID

Let's pick up where we left off yesterday. Right after Saul was rejected as king, God sent Samuel to anoint the next king. First Samuel 16 tells a story you may be familiar with. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem to a man named Jesse. God had selected one of Jesse's sons to be the next king. Samuel went through the sons one by one looking for the one chosen by God.

Read 1 Samuel 16. In verse 7, what did God tell Samuel to look for (or not look for) in the next king?

Finally, Samuel asked if there were any other sons, and Jesse told him about his youngest son tending sheep.

Sometimes, when we feel rejected by people, we feel like we've been overlooked by God as well. But this story is such a beautiful example: even though David was not chosen by his father to be brought in from the field, God ensured David didn't miss his assignment. When you've been chosen by God, even people's rejections will not override God's assignment.

How does the story of David being chosen by God for the assignment of king speak to you personally?

Look at verses 14-23. What happened to Saul?

Saul was still king at this point, even though David had been anointed as the next king. David was sent for because he could play the lyre to help calm Saul's spirit. David comforted King Saul and was allowed to stay in the court.

In 1 Samuel 17 we see that one day during a battle with the Philistines, David came to the front lines of the Israelite army to bring food to his brothers, who were fighting in battle. He saw the giant Philistine named Goliath making threats against God's people.

What was David's reaction to Goliath's defiance of God?
(See 1 Sam. 17:26,36,45.)

What surprises you about David's reaction?

Setting aside everything you already know about David, do you think this reaction to the enemy of God's people meant David would be a good leader? Why or why not?

How did God prepare David for this assignment? How does knowing this part of David's story help you trust that, in your own hard circumstances, God could use this as preparation for a future assignment?

David defeated Goliath, and, from that day on, Saul kept David among his servants, not allowing him to return home. David marched with the troops and became popular among the people, so much so that Saul became jealous of David and attempted to have him killed. For the rest of 1 Samuel, David's greatest enemy was Saul himself. Saul hunted David, the chosen king, for the rest of his life.



I don't want to assign David thoughts and feelings that aren't made clear from the text. However, I can tell you that if I were David and had been anointed the future king, I would have made some assumptions of what God would do with me at that point and how my life would look. I would have assumptions about:

GOD'S TIMING—I will take the throne quickly. But as we see from the text, it was years (some commentaries say as many as ten to fifteen years) before David became the ruling king over all of Israel.

GOD'S PROTECTION—I will be protected from any possible attack from Saul. As we continue to read the story, we see Saul wanted to kill David and sought to do just that for many years. David could be found hiding in caves and constantly running in fear of his life.

GOD'S PROVISION—God will surely provide for me solid people to surround me and set me up to succeed in my calling. In 1 Samuel 22:2 we read a description of the men who surrounded David: "And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about 400 men."

If you were David, how would you have struggled at this point in your life?

This is where my trust in God can start to feel shaky—when I make assumptions about God's timing, protection, and provision that don't play out in my life like I thought they would. If you've been familiar with my story the past several years, you know that in early 2016 my heart was shattered by the discovery that my husband was being unfaithful. As I've walked through the hard road of healing from this devastation, I've spent hours in counseling learning how to repair my broken trust with Art.

I'll be honest, there are some days when repairing trust feels like an impossible task. Just when I think I'm making progress something triggers a traumatizing memory and the wounds feel fresh all over again. It's been a very "two steps forward, ten steps back, eight steps forward, one step back, two steps forward" kind of progress. If you do the math from that last sentence, progress is being made, but it's slow. And shaky at times.

Trust is hard won for me. But it's doubly hard to rebuild.

I've learned trust is the oxygen of human relationships, and without it, authentic connection can't occur.

An added complication for me is that when my trust was broken with Art, I found a deeper resistance in my heart to trust God as well. I hadn't expected this, but I very much experienced it. It was so hard for me to process how God saw what was happening with my husband and didn't stop it.

Gracious, I wish I were sitting down expressing this struggle of mine with you, just the two of us over coffee rather than in these typed words. You'd see tears in my eyes. And maybe I'd see tears in yours as well. Because even if you haven't experienced this same hurt in your marriage, I would imagine you've also experienced God allowing something that's hard for you to process. Some place where you trusted God but then His timing, His protection, or His provision didn't look at all like you thought it would.

You know God is trustworthy, but it doesn't feel like you can personally trust Him with this situation. And that causes a skepticism you don't want to be there in your relationship with Him.

I don't have quick and easy answers for you. But I can tell you I'm learning a lot about what to pursue and what not to pursue in hard life circumstances.

Pursuing answers to why God allows hard things has never given me the peace I want. Honestly, even if God did tell me why, I probably wouldn't see enough of His big picture to agree with Him. I don't think answers to our "why" questions would make our circumstances better or give us a peace in the midst of them.

So, I have to pursue something different. I'm choosing to pursue learning how to daily rely on God in the midst of circumstances that make me resistant to trust.

C. S. Lewis said, "Relying on God has to begin all over again every day as if nothing had yet been done."³

PURSUING
ANSWERS TO
WHY GOD
ALLOWS HARD
THINGS HAS
NEVER GIVEN
ME THE PEACE I
WANT.



When we rely on God daily, we can experience the fruit of trust. Scripture outlines a variety of outcomes that will come about as we make the decision to declare our God is trustworthy rather than determine whether or not He's trustworthy because of our circumstances.

Here are some attributes of God we can bank on in declaring He is trustworthy:

- **UNCHANGABLENESS** (immutability)—God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God is not robotic. God does have feelings. He feels love, compassion, righteous anger, and grief. But, unlike humans, His emotions are always in line with His true, sinless character. His character does not shift with His emotions.
- **WISDOM** (divine intelligence)⁴—God always chooses the best goals and the best means to accomplish those goals.
- **KNOWLEDGE** (omniscience)—God knows all things in their entirety. There is nothing hidden from God. Because God knows all things and sees all things, only He sees the big picture of which we see in part.
- **RIGHTEOUSNESS** (justice)—God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right.
- **PEACE** (order)—God is not the author of confusion and disorder, yet He is active in the midst of confusion to bring about His eventual fully controlled order.⁵

Which one of these attributes speaks most deeply to your heart right now?

FRUIT OF TRUSTING GOD

On the next page are some wonderful verses we can incorporate into our prayers, thoughts, and conversations as we pursue relying on God. These speak to the fruit we will experience as we rely on God and stand on the assurance of our trustworthy God. We have to fight the urge to expect our version of God's good timing, God's good provision, and God's good protection to match what we script out for our lives. A big part of learning to rely on a trustworthy God is resetting how we define *good*. Some other words we may have to redefine are *peace* and *security* and *strength* and allow God's definition to invade our reality.

FRUIT	SCRIPTURE
<i>PEACE</i>	Isaiah 26:3-4 (See also Rom. 15:13.)
<i>SECURITY</i>	Psalm 37:3 (See also Ps. 32:10; 125:1; Isa. 28:16; 57:13.)
<i>PROTECTION FROM DANGER</i>	Psalm 31:14-15; 32:7; 33:18-22; 91:1-4
<i>FREEDOM FROM FEAR</i>	Psalm 125:1; Proverbs 29:25
<i>PROVISION</i>	Proverbs 28:25 (See also Jer. 17:7-8.)
<i>STRENGTH</i>	Isaiah 30:15; 40:29-31

Now back to David's story. What I would have assumed David's reality to be and what it actually looked like several years after being anointed king are vastly different.

Read 1 Samuel 24:3-15. What opportunity did David have in the cave? What did David's actions say about his character and trust in God?

Have you ever had the opportunity to get revenge—however small? How did you handle the situation?

Looking back on the situation you thought of in the previous question, how does this relate to a bigger decision to trust God or not?

The Book of 1 Samuel ends with Saul and his sons dead on the battlefield.

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5. How long did David reign in Judah? And in Jerusalem?

David became king of Israel and shortly after moved his headquarters to Jerusalem. He united the northern tribes with the southern tribes under one crown. He moved the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem too. David desired to build God a temple to dwell in.

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17. What did David ask to do for God?

What did God promise to do for David?

Who would build a house for God?

What was the promise God made in verse 16? How is this pointing to Jesus? (Look at Luke 1:31-33.)

Scripture refers to David as “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). Knowing this—and knowing that David wrote many beautiful psalms in the Bible and that from his lineage King Jesus was born—can make us feel like David was superhuman, almost too perfect, and hard to relate to. However, David was not a perfect man. If you know much about the rest of his story, there was a season of his life that looked more like a reality TV show gone bad than something you would see in the Bible.

David got distracted, was tempted, and then entered into a situation you’d never picture him in. He committed adultery and then orchestrated a murder to cover it

up. But can I whisper something from the depths of my heart? Being able to see David's eventual humble response to his sins in Psalm 51 helps me. His frailties give me a safe place to admit and process my own. His sin helps shed light on my own. And His redemption helps give me hope for my own.

Ultimately, being able to see God's response to David, still calling him a man after His own heart despite his failings, deepens my trust in God. There were still really hard consequences unleashed by his sin, but God's grace paved the way to an amazing legacy.

Read Psalm 51. List a few lines from the psalm that speak to your heart today.

How does David's story of sin and repentance give you hope for your story?

We see so much emotion wrapped up in the words of Psalm 51 as well as many of the other psalms David wrote. Emotions are powerful.

In hard situations, do you typically process emotionally and then spiritually? Or spiritually and then emotionally? Write some thoughts about this below.

What is a strong emotion you feel that could show you are not trusting God?

And on the flip side of that, what is a strong emotion you feel that shows you *are* trusting God?

It's important here to recognize that our human emotion is not discounted by truth. For example, just because we know the truth does not mean we do not doubt. Rather, we can fully experience doubt, but we filter it through the truth, which should allow us to respond to our doubt in faith. We can fully feel the feeling, but the expression of what we feel needs to be fueled by faith, which produces hope in our trustworthy King.

David knew what sin was like, and he knew forgiveness. Before David's death, he passed on both God's promises and His instructions to his son Solomon.

Read 1 Kings 2:1-12. What were David's last instructions to his son Solomon?

What is the promise David referred to in verse 4?

What do you think this promise means?

Flip to the New Testament and read Matthew 1:1. Whose Son is Jesus?

Jesus is the Son of David. He is the King of kings. He will be the One God sends to save His people.



King SOLOMON

One of the most exciting moments of my life was the birth of my firstborn daughter. Part of the reason was the sheer nature of welcoming a new life into the world. But another reason for the excitement for us that day was that we had been told we were having a boy!

So our planned name of Andrew Cole had to be quickly reconsidered.

We landed on the name Hope, which for us was layered with meaning both biblical and personal. I loved Jeremiah 29:11, and, though I didn't understand the full meaning of the verse, I loved the words dancing around the theme of hope. But also, personally, Hope was born in the midst of a hard time in our marriage. Seeing God bring life into our world through this delightful child made the name Hope all the more fitting.

Names are important. And the naming of David and Bathsheba's son was no exception. Solomon, later to become King Solomon, was the wisest king to ever live. However, before Solomon was ever known for his wisdom, and before he was even king, his story started in the midst of pain.

Read 2 Samuel 12:13-25.

Solomon was not King David and Bathsheba's first child. Their first child died as a result of their sin. I want to pause here and say I know that statement hits hard for some of us. It does for me too. Next week in the Digging Deeper section we look at the death of another son because of his father's sin. I'd encourage you to flip ahead and read that segment if you need to today. Especially if you have lost a child or a loved one, these two stories can seem confusing and maybe even

disillusioning. Why would a loving God do something so harsh and seemingly unfair? I can't provide full answers, but I hope by exploring these tragedies together we can learn even more about God's character and His goodness no matter what.

In David and Bathsheba's case, God graciously provided another son, Solomon.

When you look in your Bible, your footnote may say that Solomon's name means "peace" (v. 24). This helps us to see that God intended for there to be peace. As we look deeper into the Hebrew, based on some recent studies we find that Solomon's name is derived from the Hebrew word **שלם (shillem)** which means "to replace or restore."⁶

Keeping that meaning in mind, why do you think David and Bathsheba named their son Solomon?

Solomon was the gracious gift God gave to bring restoration to David and Bathsheba in the midst of their pain.

In verse 25, what other name was given to Solomon? What does this other name mean? (Look in the footnotes of your Bible for help.)

Why do you think Solomon was also given that name?

Here's what we don't know: Depending on the translation you read, it can appear like God gave Solomon the name Jedidiah. That's the way it appears when I read these verses in the NIV. But the ESV has different punctuation, which could lead us to believe it could be David saying the boy should be called Jedidiah.

So, here's what we do know about Solomon's name: He is called Solomon. Based on all that we've studied about the naming of Solomon (Jedidiah) we can know from the beginning of his life he was both a gift of restoration for David and Bathsheba, used by God to establish peace within Israel during his reign, and he was deeply loved by God.

But make no mistake, though there was restoration, there was not long-term peace in this family. In 2 Samuel 12:10, the Lord spoke to David through the prophet Nathan, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite [Bathsheba] to be your wife."

Solomon was only one of King David's nineteen sons (1 Chron. 3:1-9). Needless to say, competition for David's throne was fierce. The competition starts before King David's death (1 Kings 1) and finishes with Solomon being named king and ascending to the throne (1 Kings 2:12).

Look at 1 Kings 1–2:17 and answer the following questions.

Why did Adonijah think he should be king? (See 1 Kings 2:15.)

From your study so far and your knowledge of the rest of Scripture, name some other times God chose someone other than the obvious for a position.

What did Adonijah attempt to do in order to become king?

How did Adonijah react when he was told Solomon had been made king of Israel?

Solomon agreed to spare Adonijah's life but on the condition that he "show himself a worthy man" (1 Kings 1:52). Sadly, Adonijah showed himself to be wicked and deceptive. Adonijah, through Bathsheba, asked for the hand of Abishag, the Shunammite woman who served King David on his deathbed. On the surface, this seemed like no big deal. Maybe Adonijah was ready to settle down and start a family, and he really liked Abishag. However, there was subtle deception in this request.

Adonijah asked for a woman who was in the court of King Solomon, and if he took her as his wife this could be seen as an act of attempting to claim the kingship from Solomon! Remember Solomon's condition for Adonijah's safety? Adonijah showed his wickedness, and, as a result, he was sentenced to death.

With Adonijah's death, Solomon sat securely as the third king of Israel.

Read 1 Kings 3:3-14. In your own words, how would you define *wisdom*?

WE ALL NEED
WISDOM STRAIGHT
FROM GOD—FOR
DECISION-MAKING,
FOR HELPING
OTHERS, FOR
UNDERSTANDING
ANOTHER PERSON'S
VIEWPOINT.

Why do you think Solomon asked for wisdom? And how does his request highlight his trust in God at that point in his life?

Why was it good for him to request wisdom?



We'll read more about Solomon in the days to come, but I've always been struck by his request. Even though he was a newly crowned king, he didn't ask for strength or admiration or even negotiating skills. He asked for wisdom. We all need wisdom straight from God—for decision-making, for helping others, for understanding another person's viewpoint.

Before you close your Bible study today, spend a moment asking God for wisdom. Maybe you need wisdom for a specific situation or maybe you want to ask for wisdom to guard your heart and mind every day. Think about how using God's wisdom instead of your own opinions is a good demonstration of trusting God. And lastly, thank Him for giving you understanding and truth.



Shechem

the TEMPLE

I am a planner. A problem-solver. So when I bring my struggles to the Lord in prayer, I tend to also bring my carefully thought-out ideas and suggestions He can choose from.

Here's what I think will work, Lord. I just need You to sign off on one of these, okay?

But the longer I walk with Him, the more I discover that isn't the way God works. His ways? They aren't our ways. And that's actually something we should be thankful for, even when He asks us to do things that don't make sense to us.

In looking at the life of Solomon, we see he started out trusting God and honoring His ways. Early on in his reign, we find him lifting up a completely God-honoring prayer full of trust during one of the most pivotal times in his kingdom—the dedication of the temple.

Solomon's monumental achievement was the construction of the temple of God. For all of King David's tremendous achievements and accomplishments, the one thing he was not able to accomplish was the construction of the temple. God didn't allow David to build the temple because David was a man of war and bloodshed (1 Chron. 22:8; 28:3). This can appear like an unfair consequence. After all, most of the battles David fought were in obedience to God. But consider this: the task of building the temple wasn't an assignment God gave to David and then took away from him after all the battles. Building the temple was David's request (2 Sam. 7:2), a request God denied.

David's desire to build the temple was a good thing, which can make it feel like a good idea. But not all good ideas are God ideas. When we find ourselves in similar situations, we have yet another opportunity to make the choice to trust God.

Read 1 Kings 8:17-18. Wanting to build the temple was a right desire in David's heart but it wasn't the right timing with God. How does this apply to something in your life right now?

God gave the task, responsibility, and privilege of building the temple to Solomon.

The actual construction of the temple can be found in 1 Kings 6:1–9:10.

As you look at 1 Kings 6:1–9:10, does anything from the construction of the temple surprise you or stand out?

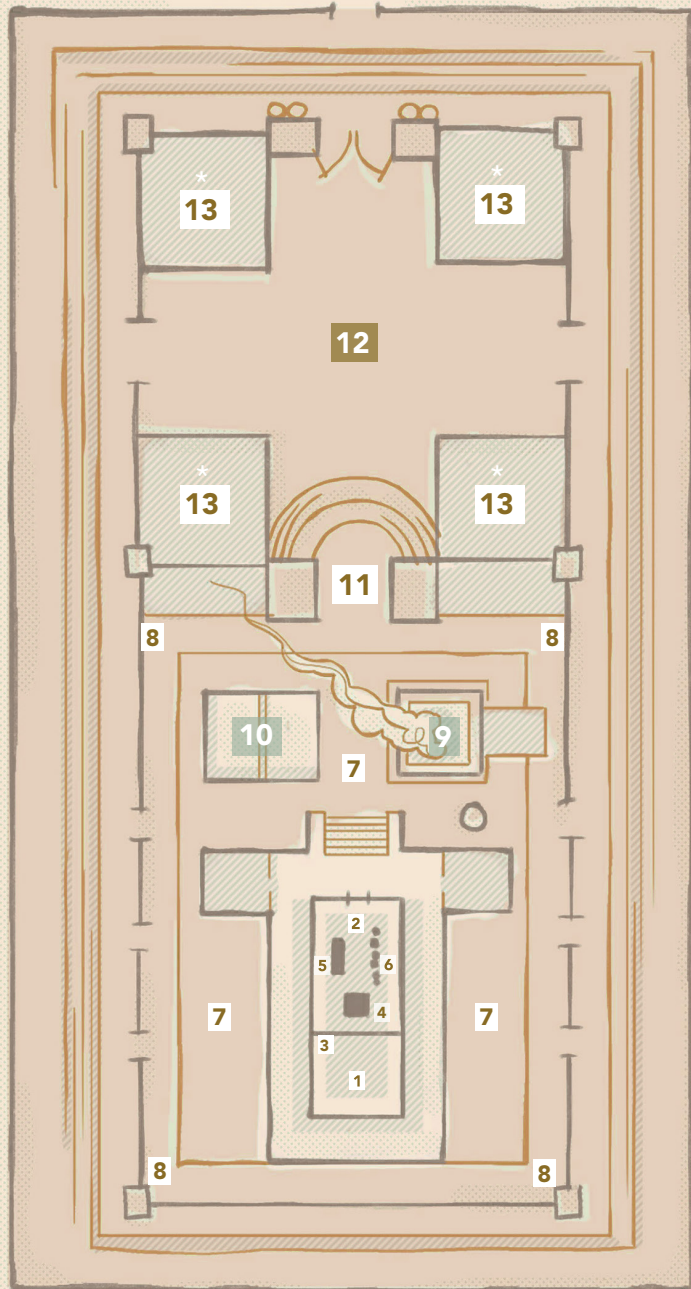
Look at the temple infographic on the next page. What are some things that stand out to you about the temple itself? (If you have extra time this week, feel free to do further research on the areas of the temple that stood out to you.)

When the construction was complete, King Solomon dedicated the temple (1 Kings 8).

Read 1 Kings 8:22-53.

The Temple

1. Holy of Holies
2. Holy Place
3. Veil
4. Altar of Incense
5. Table of Showbread
6. Seven-branched Lampstand
7. Court of Priests
8. Court of Israel (men)
9. Altar of Burnt Offerings
10. Animal Preparation Area
11. East Gate
12. Court of Women
13. Women's Balconies



As we read Solomon's prayer, let's pay close attention to both the words of the prayer and its structure. Solomon used three different Hebrew words for prayer, which each have their own meaning. Underline in your Bible or note these words as you read through the verses.

1. Intercession and praise (vv. 28-30,33,35);
2. Plea for mercy or help (vv. 38,45);
3. Cry of joy or sorrow (v. 52).⁷

Clearly, we see the intense emotion of Solomon in his prayer. All of the emotion leads us to the essence of his prayer—two very important realities.

1. Humanity's pattern is waywardness.
2. God's pattern is covenant commitment and steadfast grace.

When have you seen these two realities collide in your life or in the life of someone you know? Write about one of those times.

Throughout this prayer, King Solomon seemed to anticipate all the ways the people of God could (and would) sin and wander away from Him (vv. 31-51). Solomon's prayer can be broken down into seven specific petitions, and in each of these instances we see the propensity and pattern of Israel turning away from the Lord. Solomon, however, reminded the people that even in the midst of their unfaithfulness, God would remain faithful to all those who would be repentant and turn toward Him. Solomon described just this when he referred to the "covenant of love" (v. 23, NIV). The Hebrew word translated as "love" is *hesed*, which refers to the loyalty or unbroken nature of God's covenant.⁸ Another translation of this Hebrew word is "steadfast"—*hesed* is the steadfast love of God.

How would you define the word *steadfast*? Why is it important that our God's love is steadfast?

The ending of Solomon's prayer (vv. 52-53) is as important as the beginning (v. 23). King Solomon started by declaring the covenant-keeping character of God based on the promise God made to David, and he ended by referencing the covenant promises God made to Moses.

Look up Exodus 19:5 and Deuteronomy 7:6. What did God promise to Moses?

All of Scripture anticipates the coming of Jesus and His kingdom. The beauty of Scripture is seeing how the will and desire of God for reconciliation and unity among the nations is woven throughout. For instance, one of the petitions we find in Solomon's prayer is a petition for the foreigner that "they shall hear of your great name" (1 Kings 8:42a). We see God's greater redemptive plan to save and rescue both Jew and Gentile even here in 1 Kings.

How would the foreigner hear of the great name of the Lord? They would hear it through God's people, who would be a witness to all humanity. Jesus described something very similar in Matthew 5:14-16 when He called the people of God "a city set on a hill." What a glorious privilege and responsibility for us today to make known the great name of our Lord!

What does it practically look like to be a city on a hill? Who inspires you to be this way?

In 1 Kings chapter 9, we see God's response after Solomon completed the temple and dedicated it.

God appeared to Solomon and reminded him of the unconditional promise He made to David (v. 5).

Read 1 Kings 9:6, and then list some of the consequences found in verses 7-9.

In verse 6, there is a significant shift from unconditional to conditional. God reminded Solomon of not only his responsibility but the responsibility of the Israelites to turn to God and remain faithful. The language of this address shifts from second person singular (you) to second person plural (in the southern United States, we'd say y'all) to include all the people within this covenant responsibility. Essentially, as Solomon led, so the Israelites would follow. As Solomon trusted, the Israelites would be prone to trust. As Solomon slipped into distrust, the Israelites would follow into wayward and distrustful living.

After having some amazing encounters with God, why do you think Solomon still slipped into disobedience and distrust?

Have you ever been in a situation where you were tempted to place your trust in others or yourself above God? Explain.

I don't know what situation is begging you to put your trust in yourself or your own desires above the Lord. I don't know what steps of obedience God is currently calling you to take. But let me be the gentle whisper in your ear encouraging you to keep going. Keep trusting. Keep taking step after obedient step.

We don't have to understand the why of God's ways. But we do have to keep choosing to follow them.

Let's not stop short of our victory with God. He is working things out. He is present. His plan is still good, and He can still be trusted. These are true certainties even when life feels so very uncertain.

WE DON'T HAVE
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THE WHY OF
GOD'S WAYS. BUT
WE DO HAVE TO
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TO FOLLOW THEM.



the WIVES

I don't think anyone wakes up and says, "I'm going to make a total mess of my life today. I plan to purposefully ignore all the wisdom God has ever given me, sin like crazy, and ruin all that I hold dear."⁹

No, I think the unraveling of a life starts slowly. Much like what happened to one of my favorite sweaters. It was the kind of sweater that snagged easily if I wasn't careful. For the longest time, I was mindful of the delicate nature of this sweater, protecting it so I could make it last and enjoy wearing it time and again.

But one day I got in a hurry and pulled a huge snag in it. And instead of taking the time to properly repair it, I snipped the loose threads and hoped for the best. That decision started an unraveling process that ruined my sweater.

I believe this is where we find King Solomon today—forgetting to carefully guard his heart (Prov. 4:23) and making choices that ultimately led to the unraveling of his faithfulness to God.

As we've seen, Solomon started out well. He was a king who sought the Lord for wisdom. He built the temple and prayerfully dedicated it to the Lord. He was a greatly accomplished man, with a palace brimming with riches and a heart so overflowing with wisdom that people from all over the world sought an audience with him (1 Kings 10:23-24).

But Solomon had an area of sin that became a snagging point for him in his relationship with the Lord.

According to 1 Kings 11:1, what was Solomon's snagging point?

This was a big issue because God commanded His people not to intermarry.

Read Deuteronomy 7:3-6. Why did God command His people not to intermarry with those outside of the nation of Israel?

Not only did God command His people not to intermarry, but He had spoken this directly to Solomon twice, both at Gibeon and after the temple was finished.

You cannot enter into an intimate love relationship with someone without that person not only affecting your mind and your body but also your soul.

Sadly, despite all the wisdom Solomon had been given, he still gave in to the sinful desires of his heart. This king, who prayed during the temple dedication that the Lord would turn the hearts of the people of Israel toward Himself (1 Kings 8:58), clung to his forbidden wives and ended up with his own heart being turned away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:2-3).

It would be easy for us to focus on the dysfunctional family dynamics that Solomon had to deal with. However, as we consider the events that took place during Solomon's ascension to the throne, we could miss a subtle character trait of Solomon that we will see in greater clarity throughout his life. Solomon's reaction to Adonijah's request to take Abishag as his wife was drastic and filled with emotion, anger, and violence. And as we look deeper, we will find that Solomon had a soft spot for women.

For all the riches, power, and might God had provided Solomon, the king still experienced deep distrust in God. Solomon's decision to cling to his wives is evidence of his distrust that God could be the source of his satisfaction. If Solomon's response to Adonijah's request for Abishag tunes our ears to the possibility of a character flaw, Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 3:1) is the first chord struck that enables us to hear the sound of sorrow that would follow.

Solomon's many marriages to foreign women went directly against God's direction, warning the people of Israel that their hearts would be turned away from the Lord their God as a result of these marriages (1 Kings 11:2). Again, evidence of distrust in God's goodness. It's important to note that the issue wasn't an ethnicity issue in marriage; it was an issue of idolatry and turning hearts toward false gods.

Read 1 Kings 11:4. What happened to Solomon?

I find it so interesting that this Scripture verse references Solomon's father, David. As we noted previously, David was also a man whose heart had been led astray by his sinful desire for a woman. His "snagging" point was not so different from his son's, leading David to commit sin upon sin upon sin (2 Sam. 11). But instead of being labeled a man who did evil in the sight of the Lord as Solomon was (1 Kings 11:6), David was called a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14).

Why do you think David was still called a man after God's own heart while Solomon was labeled differently?

David's response to his sin was quite different from Solomon's response. Read 2 Samuel 12:1-14 and compare it to what we have already read in Psalm 51 (Day 2). What do these sections of Scripture tell us about David's response to his sin?

David owned his sin. He chose to repair the breach in his relationship with God using the thread of repentance—confessing his sins and placing his affection and his devotion firmly on the Lord once again.

Solomon continued in his sin. His refusal to repent and realign his desires with the Lord's resulted in God's declaration that He would tear the kingdom away from Solomon during the rule of his son. Solomon's legacy would not be all God had originally designed and desired it to be (1 Kings 11:9-12).

Oh, sweet friends, God's reminders to us in today's passages should not be taken lightly. God isn't after our earthly accomplishments. And He doesn't want us going through the motions of devotion. He's after our hearts. God wants to be our soul's sole desire. And the minute we turn our hearts away from God is the minute our intimacy with Him and our legacy begins to unravel.

This is exactly what takes place with Solomon, especially in his old age. Solomon's love, affection, and trust shifted from God to his wives and their gods.

One of the saddest sentences in 1 Kings may be the most overlooked sentence. First Kings 11:4b says, "And his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father." In this one sentence we see that Solomon is one of many kings on a journey of half-hearted trust. Really, half-hearted trust is simply distrust.

Before we end today's study, let's do a recap of the time line of Solomon's affections.

- He worshiped at the high places as was acceptable because the temple of God did not yet exist (1 Kings 3:2).
- He gained wisdom from God (1 Kings 3:5-14).
- He left the high places to worship God at the ark of the covenant (1 Kings 3:15).
- He built the temple and placed the ark inside of it (1 Kings 5-8).
- He turned away from godly wisdom (1 Kings 11:1-4).
- He returned to the high places, now condemned, and defied God (1 Kings 11:5-8).¹⁰

HALF-HEARTED
TRUST IS SIMPLY
DISTRUST.



After the temple was built, all of the high places should have been destroyed! But they weren't.

Important note: High places, prior to the construction of the temple, were acceptable places of worship as long as they were used to glorify God. A high place means a place of worship. It looked like a stage or a platform where religious activities took place. The danger with the Israelites' use of the high places was that they lived with an awareness of how other cultures worshiped

false gods. These other nations also built high places, but they were for worshiping false gods and often included practices that were highly detestable in God's sight.

So, after the temple was built, that should have been the designated place of worship for the Israelites. The other high places should have been torn down as God repeatedly instructed His people to do.

This begs the question, why didn't Solomon destroy these high places? By allowing the high places to stay standing, the people were tempted to use them as alternate places to worship, which was dishonoring to God. But even more disturbing, we also see the Israelites following some of the practices of surrounding pagan nations to try and get specific needs met apart from trusting God. For example, going to a high place for the fertility god if they were struggling to get pregnant or worshiping Baal, the thunder god, when they were concerned about a lack of rain.

WHEN WE
LET THE
HIGH PLACES
STAND, WE
ARE INVITING
TEMPTATION
TO CAPTIVATE
OUR HEARTS.



Think about this in the context of our lives. Are there places we turn when we don't think God is coming through for us and we're struggling to trust Him?

This is true for our own stories. God is asking us to destroy all the high places in our lives. When we let these places stand, we are inviting temptation to captivate our hearts.

Take a moment to pray, asking the Lord to reveal anything that holds your affection more than Him. Take the time to repair those seemingly small snags—the ones that can have devastating consequences—by going to God in repentance. Humility beautifully ties the knot between our hearts and His.

MAP OF *the* HIGH PLACES



TEL DAN

Sea
of
Galilee

MT. CARMEL

MT. TABOR

Mediterranean Sea

ISRAEL

GERIZIM

SHILOH

GILGAL

OPHRAH

BOCHIM

BETHEL

MIZPAH

GIBEON

GIBEAH

NOB

KIRJATH-JEARIM

JERUSALEM
UNNAMED HILL

BETHLEHEM

HEBRON

The
Dead
Sea

1. List of High Places adapted from *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: Embracing Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology and Biblical, heological, and Ecclesiastical Biography from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908–1914), 277.

One of the most constant themes we see throughout Scripture is the truth that God is trustworthy. The actual English word *trustworthy* only shows up a handful of times in the Bible; however, the truth of God's trustworthy character is evident in every page of Scripture.¹¹ Throughout the story of Scripture, we see evidence of this truth in God's covenant promises made to Abraham, Moses, and David.

Take a moment and recollect images of God's faithfulness. When we remember His faithfulness, we come to believe that because God is faithful, He can be trusted. In other words, He is trustworthy. God promised Abraham that his children would be like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. This comes true and is one of the reasons why the Egyptians feared the Israelites and eventually turned them into slaves. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, and through Moses the Israelites were led out of captivity toward the land God had promised.

Think about every instance and evidence of God's trustworthy nature in the wilderness wandering. God went before them in a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. God rested in the midst of their presence in the tabernacle. God provided them manna to eat. Every need of the Israelites was met. Yet, there was one thing God did that outshines every other example. One very specific deed done that exemplifies His trustworthy nature. God was faithful to the promise He made to Adam and Eve by crushing the head of the serpent as He sent His own Son to earth to die the death we should have died. Jesus reigns victorious over sin and death.

This is why the psalmist could truthfully declare in Psalm 111:7,

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

The Hebrew word for *trustworthy* comes from the root word אָמַן (*á-mân*) and encapsulates loyalty, faithfulness, and dependability—all characteristics that are true and evident in God. In one sentence the psalmist declared that all of God's works are faithful and filled with justice; therefore, He is trustworthy. When we read about trust in the Old Testament, we will also come across the Hebrew word *bāṭaḥ*, which is a parallel to *āman*.¹² When

we trust (**bāṭah/āman**) in someone or something, we are typically looking for a source of security to rely on. In the Old Testament it's interesting to see that whenever the object of our trust is God, we are commanded to trust (Ps. 4:5; 37:3; 62:8; 115:9; Prov. 3:5; Isa. 26:4). However, when the object of trust is humanity or human-made objects, these terms have negative implications (Ps. 41:9; 146:3; Jer. 9:4; 46:25).

When we come to the New Testament, the root word for trust is πιστός (**pistós**) and refers to being worthy of belief, faithful, and dependable. It can even elicit the response of trust or faith. Of the roughly sixty-seven occurrences of πιστός (**pistós**), forty-five instances translate to "faith" or "faithful."¹³ Nine instances translate literally as "trustworthy" (1 Cor. 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Titus 1:9; 3:8; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 22:6).¹⁴

I don't think it's a coincidence that the apostle Paul commended his disciples to be reminded of the trustworthy nature of the gospel and Jesus. To Timothy, he said, "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance" (1 Tim. 4:9). To Titus he pled, "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught" (Titus 1:9). These encouragements are so applicable to us today. We need this very reminder. We need to be reminded of Revelation 22:6, "And he said to me, 'these words are trustworthy and true.'" In order to experience the hope of these trustworthy words, we must know the Word. As we rehearse the truth of the faithful character and nature of God, we will be filled with hope, which will elicit active and obedient faith in our trustworthy God.