

Study Guide for the Week of April 24, 2005

Life's Missing Ingredients—Part 2, Optimism

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.saintpauls-umc.com.

Monday. This week we'll be looking at some of the events surrounding the famous King David. He was considered a man after God's own heart, but as we'll see, he also took God's grace for granted--an act that would have tragic results. Today we'll see how David began down a tragic road. **Read 2 Samuel chapter 11.** A what point or points along this journey could David have turned back? What could he have done differently to avoid such tragedy? What lessons can you draw from David's actions?

Tuesday. Today we'll read the rest of the events around David's affair with Bathsheba. **Read 2 Samuel 12:1-10.** David is confronted by the prophet Nathan. As a prophet, Nathan's job was to be the mouthpiece of God; to pass along God's word to those that might not hear any other way. God's word to David was harsh. He knew the difference between good and evil and chose evil. **Read 2 Samuel 12:13-25.** Notice David's reaction to Nathan's harsh words. What does David do when confronted with his wrongdoing? Notice that in the face of such tragic news and the conviction of his wrongdoing, David is able to trust God. What in this story speaks to you and your level of trust and optimism?

Wednesday. To see David's faith-based optimism in action, read the powerful story of his slaying of the giant, Goliath when he was just a boy. **Read 1 Samuel 17:20-51.** Why was David able to do what no one else could? What was the source of his optimism in the face of daunting odds against Goliath? How might this story shape your optimism?

Thursday. Today and tomorrow we will read several New Testament scriptures related to hope, a form of optimism. **Read Romans 5:1-5.** What does this passage teach about hope and optimism? What can you draw from this to apply to your life? **Read Romans 12:12.** Repeat this verse until you have it committed to memory. What does it teach about hope and optimism?

Friday. **Read Romans 15:1-6.** Where is the message of hope in this passage? Notice that the optimism in here is tied into unity with others and the result is an outpouring of praise to God. How might hope and optimism relate to unity and praise? **Read Romans 15:13.** This is a blessing from Paul to all believers. Take this as a personal blessing for yourself. If optimism is lacking in your life, count on the fact that God's desire is to lift you out of pessimism and despair and into a life overflowing with faith-based optimism and joy. Spend time in prayer allowing God to wash over you with the hope and joy described in this passage. And remember David's words, "Who knows? God might be gracious..."