

# Explore God Adventurer's Guide

## SESSION THREE

**Big Question:** *What does trusting God look like through hardship and uncertainty?*

Today's question for discussion is regarding what our trust can look like during times of hardship and uncertainty especially when wrong is done against us. So often when emotions rise during our calamities, we lose sight of the Lord and how to act with trust in Him.

**Note:** If there are unbelievers present in your group, you may want to begin the conversation with these questions:

- On a scale of 1-10, how difficult is it for you to reconcile the existence of both suffering and God (1=easy, 10=impossible). Explain your thinking.
  - If there is a God, why do you think he allows pain and suffering in the world?

**Watch (2:39 minutes)**

[Pulse of the World on Pain and Suffering](#)

1. Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in this video? If so, who or what resonated with you?
2. Was it surprising to learn that the top question people would ask is: "Why is there pain and suffering in the world?" What would be some of the questions you'd ask God?

As we dig into our passages today, we can see how it would have been easy for David to let his emotions sway his better judgment and righteous conduct. Let's explore how he kept a sound mind and trusted in the Lord.

### Scripture Passage

1 Samuel 24:1-22 & 26 → David spares Saul's life (the first time!)

### Introduction

David, the next anointed king of Israel, is on the run from the current ruler who had the anointing of the Lord. Let's spend a moment in Saul's shoes to try and relate to him. Up to this point, Saul has been the ruler of the nation of God. Saul was in fact the first king of Israel. In 1 Samuel 8, we see that the people of God demanded Samuel, God's prophet, to place over them a king like all the other nations. Samuel brought the word of the people to God and God told Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Saul would reign for forty years as the anointed king (1 Sam. 10:1-14). He was the man in power and he performed great feats for the people of God. But we start to see Saul make decisions that would affect his anointing as God's ruler over His people. For example, in chapter 13, as a result of his impatience we see Saul make an unlawful sacrifice to God.

In chapter 15, we learn that God rejects Saul due his refusal to no longer follow God and the transition from Saul to David begins to occur. David's anointing began in the twenty-fifth year of Saul's reign, which means that David was in the process of becoming king 15 years *before* he was announced as the new ruler of God's people. Imagine how hard that was for Saul to have a young whippersnapper be groomed by God to replace him. 1 Samuel 16-31 depicts stories of

David's life during this span of time. David had a number of successes that were all marred by the pursuit of the current king, Saul. We see David be forced to flee for his life time and again, hiding in caves to avoid being captured. But we also learn what kind of heart and character

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David had. Chapter 24 is our first account of David acting wisely in his submission to the Lord, and again in Chapter 26. Twice David "had" a chance to end his afflictions, his pains, his endless nights on the run. But despite the reality of his human condition and circumstances, he always trusted in the Lord above all else. We learn what "trusting in the Lord" looked like for David, and what it can and should look like for God's people. Our circumstances should not be separated from our faith or understood apart from our faith. Instead, our circumstances should be governed by our faith in Jesus and what is true and unchanging about God.

### **Read and discuss 1 Samuel 24:1-22:**

1. What can we observe regarding David's conduct? How did he make the decision to spare Saul's life?
2. What can this passage teach us about faith and emotions?

### **Read and discuss 1 Samuel 26:**

1. What parallel do you see between these two accounts of David's faith and adherence to the Lord?
2. In light of David's conduct, how would you interpret the passage from Matthew 5:38-48 where Jesus talks about turning the other cheek?
3. What can trusting God look like for you through hardship and uncertainty?

### **Wrap Up**

We know that exercising faith in hardship and uncertainty are difficult to apply. Our life circumstances can so easily bind us into a framework of thinking and feeling in certain ways. We all have times in our lives when someone wrongs us or we get into a financial pinch or our family feels like it's falling apart. Sometimes these come unexpectedly and other times we can pinpoint a cause. When these happen we need to remember that we have the capacity to choose how we will respond: whether to act harshly or with grace and love, whether to self-loathe and isolate ourselves or turn to the Lord in hope and for help. There is an important aspect to point out in these passages: many of the problems in the world are caused by people. Sin and injustice were brought to humanity through Adam and Eve. God reveals "what is good; and what the Lord requires of you...to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God," as we see David exemplify. So when life gets difficult, instead of neglecting your faith as Saul did, go deeper in the expression of your faith as David did. Even Jesus in his suffering looked to God the Father with unwavering trust.

Although natural catastrophes and diseases weren't discussed, the same perspective applies in that the condition of brokenness in the world and upon the earth has been and is caused by the sin of humankind. The posture of our heart is what will dictate the state in which we experience such situations and respond to them. James 1:2-18 can offer further perspective.

We all encounter pain and suffering in our lives. It is quite a challenge at times to reconcile God's existence with pain and suffering. Christians believe that God is with us in these hardships and has promised to make things right again. Scripture proposes that, despite

the painful circumstances in which we often find ourselves, God can somehow guide us through them and even lead us in overcoming them.