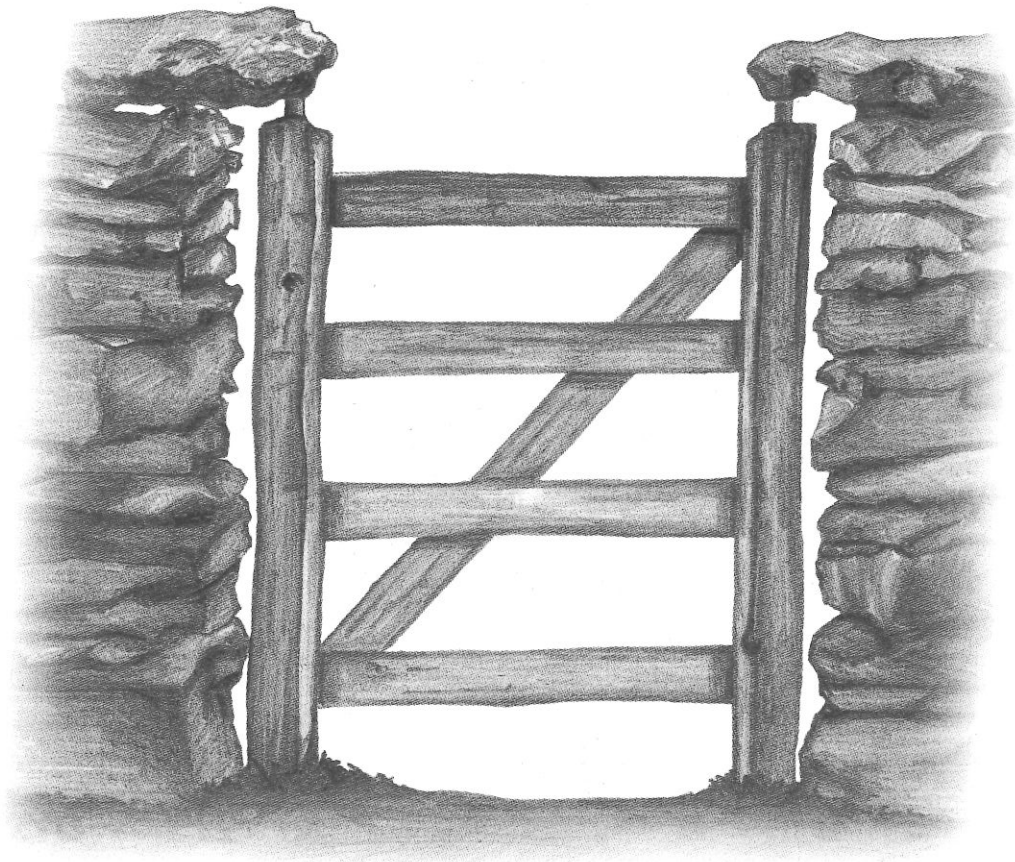


WOMEN OPENING THE WORD

ECHOING HIS HEARTBEAT

THE LIFE OF DAVID

BY CASANDRA MARTIN



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Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

*“Open for me the gates of
righteousness;
I will enter and give thanks
to the LORD.*

*This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.*

*I will give thanks,
for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.”*

Psalms 118:19-21

Entering the gates of the Lord is an invitation to enter into the presence and heart of God Himself. God longs to draw you near and transform you, heal every hurt, and open your eyes to the wonderful ways He loves you and calls you to be His own. God shares David's story with us in order to reveal how He delights in those whose hearts seek to echo the rhythm of His own heartbeat. It is a story of intensity and passion, struggle and sacrifice, joy and humility. Faith makes David's heart shine. Humility bows his heart deeply before the King. Repentance breaks his heart and turns it back to God. Praise opens the shepherd's heart to experience the richness of His glory. David enters the gates of the Lord and determines that his heart will make its home in His presence. He invites you to walk with him. Enter the gates of His presence, and let your heart dwell deeply in the love, power, and faithfulness of God. There you will find yourself transformed into a woman who echoes His heartbeat.

Welcome to WOW!

Women Opening the Word is a Bible study series designed to help women more richly and fully experience the presence of God. Meeting God in the pages of a WOW study opens your eyes to the wonder of God's love and the purpose of living deeply in His presence. Transformation is at the heart of studying the Bible. God wants you to be transformed into His likeness – to look like Jesus. The WOW Bible studies help us to answer the call to live as changed women – cross-shaped, resurrection-empowered, faith-driven, Christ-exalting women.

Whether you use the study in a classroom, small group setting, or in your personal quiet time, WOW focuses on answering three challenges every woman who longs to live closer to God faces: **Commitment** – WOW's four-day format is designed to help you find the time to

develop the discipline of daily Bible study. **Confidence** – At times, Bible study seems intimidating and overwhelming. WOW guides you on a walk through Scripture to seek God’s face and experience His transformation as you connect God’s truth directly with your life. **Creativity** – When studying the Bible feels stale, the WOW studies provide refreshing and innovative ways to encounter God through a variety of study methods, insights, and the following special features:

Day 1 Each lesson is broken into four parts. As you begin a lesson, start with Day 1. Work through the first day – open your Bible, enjoy the time with God, and experience the life-

Day 4 changing lessons He has planned for you. Tomorrow, study Day 2 and so forth. The WOW studies are designed this way to help you spend daily time deep in the presence of God. There are many lessons, treasures, and blessings God wants to pour into you as you spend time with Him in His Word. Spreading each lesson out over four days provides the best opportunity for you to absorb as much richness as you can from your time with God.



Open Your Bible! When you see this symbol, it indicates an opportunity to open your Bible and meet God in its pages. God speaks to us through His Word. He longs for you to take off your sandals and draw near to Him on holy ground. Choose an accurate, reliable, and readable translation. This study specifically refers to the New International Version (NIV). You are welcome to use any translation you prefer. The important thing is to open your Bible and prepare your heart to meet your amazing God.



Key Question – The Key symbol invites you to slow down and answer a question that speaks directly to your heart, opening it to the truths that move us toward transformation. They are thought questions. Everyone’s answers will be personal and unique. They are designed to help God’s Word speak directly to your life.



To the Heart – These are messages from my heart to yours. These special thoughts have one purpose: to help you experience the glorious richness of God’s love in a personal and intimate way.



Heart Check – This EKG is set up to help you examine your heart in the light of the lessons God reveals to us through the life of David. *Echoing the Eternal* points to the one essential truth God wants us to understand from this portion of Scripture. *Keeping Your Eye on the King* focuses our attention on how David helps us understand what it means to be a person after God’s own heart. *Growing with God* is the heart test. Here you will find a question meant to help you look deeply at your own heart in the light of God’s grace and His desire for you. Your answers will help reveal where God wants to work in your life, places that require surrender, and obstacles that are keeping you from echoing His heartbeat. The Rx is a practical prescription that helps you cement God’s truth and presence deeply in your heart.

Leading a WOW Study

Leading a WOW study is primarily about opening the door to the presence of God and helping the people with you to make the journey. You already have the tools you need – a willing and loving heart, prayer, your Bible, the help of the Holy Spirit, and your WOW book.

There are as many different ways to effectively use a WOW study as there are people excited about meeting God in His Word. The WOW studies are designed to be flexible and allow you to adapt the study to your individual and group needs. Be creative! The WOW studies are tools meant to help you dig deeply into God's Word. Use them in the way that best helps you meet God, experience the depth of His love, and be transformed into the likeness of His Son.

If you are leading a WOW study in a **45-minute Bible class format** –

Commit to spending time in prayer and study. Pray for the women in your group. Ask God to create an environment among your women that will allow Him full access to every heart. As you study, remember to honor the truth that you are meeting God in the pages of His Word. Let His love touch you first; then prepare to share that love with others. Leaders always receive deep blessings from the time spent preparing to share God's Word with others.

Divide each lesson into two parts. Using the Day 1-4 markers, ask your class to study Days 1 and 2 on week one, Days 3 and 4 on week two, and so forth. There is enough material in each two-day block to meet the needs of your class time.

Use the EKG boxes at the end of Days 2 and 4 to help you focus on the main points of the lesson. This is the one truth with which you want the class to walk away at the end of your time together. Use them to guide your preparation and the direction of the class.

Allow the class to be discussion-oriented. The Key Questions are designed to open the door for sharing thoughts, feelings, questions, and perspectives. It often takes time for women to open their hearts and be transparent. Be patient and loving. This time of discussion will help each woman plant the truth of God's Word deeply into their hearts.

Keep your eyes open for the ways God is working among you. Take special note of the many ways God is blessing your time together as a group of women studying His Word. Let that awareness be a springboard for praise, thanksgiving, and renewed surrender.

If you are leading a WOW study in a **90-minute women's Bible study format** –

Commit to spending time in prayer and study. Pray for the women in your group. Ask God to create an environment among your women that will allow Him full access to every heart. As you study, remember to honor the truth that you are meeting God in the pages of His Word.

Let His love touch you first; then prepare to share that love with others. Leaders always receive deep blessings from the time spent preparing to share God's Word with others.

Do one lesson per week, or divide the lesson into two pieces. This depends on your schedule and the amount of time your women want to devote to the study. Either way, there will be enough material to meet your needs.

Use the EKG boxes at the end of Days 2 and 4 to help you focus on the main points of the lesson. These are the main truths with which you want the class to walk away at the end of your time together. Use them to guide your preparation and the direction of the class.

Allow the class to be discussion-oriented. The Key Questions are designed to open the door for sharing thoughts, feelings, questions, and perspectives. It often takes time for women to open their hearts and be transparent. Be patient and loving. This time of discussion will help each woman plant the truth of God's Word deeply into their hearts.

Keep your eyes open for the ways God is working among you. Take special note of the many ways God is blessing your time together as a group of women studying His Word. Let that awareness be a springboard for praise, thanksgiving, and renewed surrender.

If you are using a WOW study for **personal study**—

Commit to spending time in prayer as you study. Prayer is indispensable to preparing your heart to meet God. Prayer and study go hand-in-hand and allow your heart to respond to the truths and direction God is teaching you.

Use the Day markers to help guide you in daily Bible study. As you begin a lesson, begin with Day 1. Work through the first day – open your Bible, enjoy the time with God, and experience the life-changing lessons He has planned for you. Tomorrow, study Day 2 and so forth. The WOW study is designed this way to help you spend daily time deep in the presence of God.

Use the EKG boxes at the end of Days 2 and 4. Open your heart to the deep transformation God wants to work in your life.

Keep your eyes open for the ways God is working in you. Take special note of the many ways God is blessing your time with Him. Let that awareness be a springboard for praise, thanksgiving, and renewed surrender.

Joy for the Journey

May God richly bless you as you spend this time in His Word. He has so many treasures to share with you because you are the treasure of His heart. Know that as you study, you are covered with prayer and thanksgiving. I join my heart with David's in blessing you and lifting you up to our Father.

"But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you." - Psalm 5:11

Cassandra

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Lesson 1

Hard Heart: Saul



Thank you for choosing to open your heart to this study of David. God promises to meet us in the pages of His Word and show us His own heart. As we journey together, David's life will serve as a mirror by which we can examine the way we reflect the fullness of Christ in our lives. His heart will serve as a marker to measure the depth of our commitment, the intensity of our passion, and the strength of our faith. His psalms of praise will inspire us. His prayers will lead us deeper into the presence of God. David's life opens a window into the heart of God. It is there that we meet His grace and are transformed into the likeness of His Son.

Day 1

King David. His name is written large across the pages of Scripture. Prophecies of his kingdom begin in Genesis and the ultimate fulfillment of his legacy is shouted in Revelation. For the Jews, he is the zenith of Israel's glory. David and his kingship represent Israel at its finest – and at its worst. In David, Israel holds a reflection of the spiritual kingdom another King will later bring to them.

In David, we also find a reflection of ourselves. In him, we see the best we can be — the fruit of a Spirit-filled life, intimacy with God, love, forgiveness, triumphant good in the face of evil. In him, we see the worst that we are — a struggling parent, an unfaithful spouse, a disquieted heart mired in sin and frustrated by indecision. Through David, through all the glory and all the struggles, we see God — loving, forgiving, blessing, disciplining.

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

 Read Psalm 78:70-72.

How does the psalmist describe the way God moves in David's life?

The Bible gives us an intimate portrait of David. His story fills the pages of three Old Testament books – I and II Samuel and I Chronicles. His songs and prayers find their voice in the Book of Psalms. We will stand with him in battle, cower with him in a cave, and feel the weight of the crown as it sits upon his head. We will walk with him through the streets of the city of David and call him back as he peers over the edge of the rooftop. We will weep with a father as he cries for his children, run with an outcast as he faces rebellion from one of his own, and shudder as sin scourges a path through the land and David's heart.

David, however, is never the main character of this story. This is the record of how God works in the life of one man given totally to the Lord. It is the story of how God walks with David and how He longs to walk with you. It is the chronicle of a heart – God's heart – and how He recognizes a familiar rhythm in the heart of David. It is an invitation to live wholly in the presence of God and allow Him to have full access to your heart. Through David, we hear God's persistent call to give ourselves into His hands so completely that the rhythm of our lives echoes His heartbeat.

We will learn many lessons and explore deep truths as we walk with David. His life, however, holds three main markers that frame the way in which God will reach out to us through David.

David has a heart like God's. One of the defining characteristics of David is his heart. God looks at David's heart and sees His own reflection. He listens to David's heart and hears an echo of His own heartbeat.

 Read Acts 13:22. What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart?

Through David, we are introduced to the challenge of a lifetime – to reflect the heart of God Himself.

Put your name in the blanks.

I have found _____ a woman after my
own heart; _____ will do everything
I want her to do.



Can you think of more beautiful words? It is my heart's desire that God can say these words about me. And about you. He longs to mold us into the image of His Son, to shape our hearts to mirror His own, to transform us with His wonderful love. I pray this journey with David will set your heart on the path to becoming this kind of woman – a woman who echoes His heartbeat.

David has a life that points us to Christ. David's life draws a unique line to Christ. It is in David that God finally pinpoints the family through which the Savior will come. God's purpose to redeem the world and save you unfolds through the promises He makes to David.

David also serves as a type of foreshadowing of Jesus. There are moments in David's life in which we get a clear picture of our King – how He works on our behalf, the love He has for each one of us, the power of grace, and the victory that is ours in Him. David points us to Jesus.



In what way does your life point others to Jesus?

David is a man like us. God gives us an up-close picture of David's life. Not only can we examine his actions, the psalms reveal his thoughts and the deep secrets of his heart. Most of us would be uncomfortable having our most intimate movements written down for all to read. God records David's life in this way with purpose. David was an ordinary man. He struggled. He sinned. He fell short. And God used him, loved him, blessed him, and called him His own. His life serves as a mirror. In him, we see ourselves. His life will help us recognize the places that need fuller access to God. Seeing David struggle and surrender, sin and repent, fall short and be lifted by grace will give us courage and hope. As you look at your reflection in the mirror of David's life, look carefully in the background. You will always see God standing beside you.

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

Write Psalm 25:4-5.

In what way is this your desire as you begin this study?


Day 2


Close your eyes, and turn back the pages of history. It is time to paint a picture of the time and place in which David lived and walked with God. Like all the other Bible characters, David doesn't just pop up in the black and white words that cover the pages. He lives in a town, has a family, enjoys friendships, and works in the fields. Today, we look at the political and spiritual world in which David lived and meet the woman who left David's family a powerful legacy.

 Read Ruth 4:13-22.

Who are Obed's parents? How is Obed related to David?

The first time that David is mentioned in the Bible is in the story of his great-grandmother, Ruth. It is within this story that we are introduced to some of the names and places that will become so important in David's life. Her story is the soil in which David's family history is planted. Her faith is his legacy.

 What is a legacy?

 What kind of legacy do you want to leave for your children and grandchildren?

 Read Ruth 1:1-2.

In what days does the story of Ruth take place? In what Israelite town do Naomi and Elimelech make their home?

"In the days when the judges ruled..." introduces us to a difficult time in Israel's history. At the time in which Ruth's story unfolds, Israel is in a cycle of rebellion, repression, and repentance. Over and over, they rebel against the Lord and go after other gods. To reclaim their hearts, God sends raiders and oppressors into the land. God allows foreigners to physically oppress His people so that they can see how they have enslaved themselves to the idols of the nations around them. After a period of time, the people see their need for God and cry out to Him for deliverance. Forever faithful and forgiving, God raises up a judge to lead the people out of bondage and back into His arms.

The political landscape detailed in the time of the judges is important because it reminds us of where Israel stands as a nation and how far-reaching David's influence over the people will be. At this time, Israel is not a united nation. It is a loose confederation of tribes who each watch out for the interests in their own lands. God will use David to bring together people from different areas, preferences, interests, and perspectives, making them into one nation that has worship as its central focus.

 Read Revelation 7:9-10. How will David's influence in Israel mirror the way Jesus will draw all people together?

Naomi and her family live in the town of Bethlehem in Judah. As the pages of Ruth open, the mention of Bethlehem grabs our attention. Israelites would immediately recognize it as David's hometown. It is here that he is born. He grows up in the lands surrounding the town and learns to meet God among its people, fields, and flocks. This city of David marks the entry point for the Messiah. It is to Bethlehem that Joseph takes Mary because he is of the line of David and must return to his family's ancestral home. It is in Bethlehem that Jesus is born.

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

The Book of Ruth does more, however, than provide us with political, spiritual, and historical markers of David's time. Ruth is David's great-grandmother, and her actions, which are written in this story, tell us something of the legacy of faith that shapes David's family.

Let's look at three snapshots from Ruth's life that help us catch a glimpse of the legacy that she leaves for David.

 Read Ruth 1:15-18.

What heart qualities shine from Ruth as she talks with Naomi?

This is one of the most poignant passages in the entire Bible. Love, loyalty, commitment, and generosity of spirit overflow from Ruth's heart to Naomi. Ruth intertwines her life with Naomi's and commits to staying by her side. Faithfulness becomes her legacy.

 Read Ruth 2:17-18.

What heart qualities shine from Ruth as she works in the fields?

Ruth determines to take care of her mother-in-law by going to glean in the fields. Gleaning in another's fields was the last resort of the very poor. God provided this way for those who were poverty-stricken to find food and a meager sustenance in Leviticus 19:9-10. Gleaning was backbreaking work that left the poor dependent on the kindness and generosity of others. Ruth's quiet beauty shines through as she spends the entire day gleaning in the fields to provide food for her small family. Her servant heart becomes her legacy.

 Read Ruth 3:1-6.

What heart qualities shine from Ruth as she follows Naomi's instructions regarding Boaz?

Naomi sees God's hand at work in the circumstances that surround Ruth. She encourages her to ask Boaz to become her kinsman-redeemer. Ruth obeys Naomi and follows all of her instructions. Boaz throws his cloak of protection around the young woman and promises to redeem her. Ruth's humble surrender becomes her legacy.

Ruth marries Boaz, and they have a child, who becomes David's grandfather. We can imagine that Obed's life was filled with stories about how God blessed his parents and worked providentially in their lives. These stories of God's goodness become the center around which this family's actions of faithfulness, service, and surrender are interwoven.



Everyone leaves a legacy. A legacy defines how you are remembered by your family and friends. It consists of the memories, values, and expressions that your loved ones carry with them about who you are and what is important to you. It is your life boiled down to the basics. Your legacy is the mark and impact you leave on the world.

Most people think little about the legacy they will leave behind. Everyone hopes it will be a good one, but few are deliberate about shaping their legacy day-by-day. We will see the power of Ruth's legacy unfold in the life of David. We are still learning from the legacy she left behind, even today. You have the power to make a difference in the faith of generations still to be born. What legacy will you leave them?

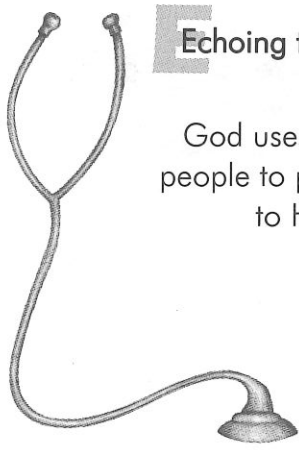


Read Psalm 78:1-7. What does this psalm teach us about building a legacy for future generations?

It is time to stop and do a Heart Check. Twice each lesson, we will take a moment to step into the examining room of God's grace, review the lessons God is teaching us, and let His Word soak deeply into our hearts. Use the Heart Check as a place of reflection, transparency, and surrender. Remember, God's greatest desire is for you to be a woman who echoes His heartbeat. This EKG will help you examine your heart in the light of God's truth, the lessons from David's story, and the mirror of Christ's call to be like Him. The Rx is a practical prescription for adjusting the rhythm of your heart to echo His.

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

Heart Check



E Echoing the Eternal

God uses ordinary people to point others to Him.

K Keeping Your Eye on the King

Ruth's legacy provides David with the template to becoming a man after God's own heart.

G Growing with God

Examine your legacy in the light of God's love and purpose.

Make a list of three specific things you want to leave as a faith legacy for those you love. What will you begin doing today to make that legacy a reality? **Rx**

Day 3

To fully understand the story of David, we must first spend time with the man who sat on Israel's throne before David did. The first half of David's life is framed within the reign of King Saul. Saul's heart serves as a counterpoint to the heart of David. His actions are shadows to David's light. Saul's choices become the crucible in which God shapes David for His purposes and glory.

Read I Samuel 8:1-9, 19-22.

 What request do the people make of Samuel?

Why do the people want a king?

What insight into the people's hearts does the Lord give Samuel?

What instruction does God give Samuel regarding the people's request?

Samuel has served as judge in Israel since he was a boy. Despite Samuel's faithful heart, his sons do not walk in his ways. The people come to Samuel with a heartbreaking request. They want a king to rule over them. They long to look like the other nations. Their spiritually blinded eyes no longer see the One who sits on the throne of heaven as their true King, and they ask for a man to take His place.

Samuel is displeased when he hears the people's request and takes his troubled heart to the Lord. God reassures Samuel that they are not rejecting him as judge, but rather rejecting God Himself as their King. They would rather serve a man they can see, than the Lord whom they cannot see.



In what way do we struggle with putting our confidence in what we can see and the tendency to measure ourselves by the standards of the world?



How do we learn to make II Corinthians 5:7 true in our daily walk with God?

God agrees to the people's request and chooses a man who will profoundly influence the life of David. God directs Samuel to anoint Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, as Israel's first king. God hands him the heart of His beloved people.

Samuel explains all the regulations of the kingship to Saul and the people. He emphasizes to Saul the importance of following God's direction and living under His authority. Yet, instead of walking close to God, instead of submitting his will to the King of Kings, Saul begins to focus on himself. Time and again, he acts foolishly and does not obey the Lord's commands.

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

 Read I Samuel 13:5-14.

In what way does Saul act foolishly?

How does God respond to Saul's disobedience?

What rich blessing does Saul forfeit because he refuses to wait?

In I Samuel 13, we have a record of Saul's disobedience before a battle against the Philistines. Samuel commands Saul to wait before going out into battle until he can arrive and offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Saul, however, becomes impatient. The troops are filled with fear as they watch the Philistines amass for the battle and Samuel doesn't appear as expected. Fearing defeat, Saul decides he can no longer delay and offers the sacrifice himself. He refuses to wait on God's timing. Samuel arrives as the last ashes fall on the fire and delivers God's judgment.

Waiting on the Lord is a powerful act of obedience. So many times, we see waiting as passive, tapping our toes and longing to do something. Anything is better than standing around. Action, of any kind, seems more productive than waiting and movement more purposeful than stillness. God sees waiting in just the opposite terms. Waiting on God and His timing requires deep surrender. Stillness acknowledges the rightness of God's movement.

Waiting aligns us with His timing and proclaims our desire to live under His authority. When we wait, we relinquish control of our circumstances, hearts, and future steps to God. In waiting, we honor His goodness, rest in His love, and depend on His power.

Write Isaiah 30:18.



Where in your life do you need to more deeply commit yourself to waiting on God?
How will you do that this week?

As this time of fear, impatience, and disobedience define the heart and reign of Saul, God reveals that He has His eye on another heart. David is just a young man, but God has already heard the echo of His heartbeat rising from the fields around Bethlehem.

Day 4

A shadow now hangs over Saul's kingdom. God has decreed that his sons will not follow him on the throne, but God is still willing to use Saul to carry out His will. The Lord gives Saul another opportunity to be obedient and to show his loyalty and faithfulness to God.

Read I Samuel 15:1-35.

What specific instruction does God give to Saul with regard to the Amalekites?

What choice does Saul make with regard to the Lord's instructions concerning the Amalekites?

What does Samuel do when he confronts Saul about his disobedience?

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

God commands Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites: every person and animal is to die. Although this judgment may seem harsh, the Amalekites have been involved in a centuries-long battle to destroy God's people. Their destruction was prophesied to Moses in Exodus 17:14.

Saul gathers his forces and attacks the Amalekites. The battle is a victory for Israel, but the choices Saul makes in obeying God's command are a profound spiritual defeat. Instead of destroying everything, Saul spares the life of the Amalekite king, Agag, and saves the best of the sheep, cattle, fat calves, and lambs. He collects everything that is good in his own eyes and destroys anything he considers despised and weak.

His choices unveil a sobering picture of Saul's heart. His choices, justifications, actions, and intentions revealed in the midst of this battle showcase a heart that is hard and unyielding to the Lord. Saul's heart serves as a warning and a litmus test for our own hearts.

First Samuel 15 gives us a snapshot of Saul's heart. Fill in the chart using the passages listed to note Saul's attitude and actions.

Scripture Snapshot	A Developing Picture of Saul's Heart
I Samuel 15:8-9	
I Samuel 15:12	
I Samuel 15:17	
I Samuel 15:23	
I Samuel 15:24	
I Samuel 15:30	

The picture of Saul's heart that develops throughout I Samuel 15 is bleak. He follows his own judgment rather than listening to the voice of God. He takes the glory that should be devoted to the Lord and goes off to build a monument in his own honor. Once humble, Saul's heart is now swollen with arrogance and rebellion. He is so full of himself that he has no room for God. Instead of following God's command to utterly destroy everything, Saul saves the life of King Agag and the best of the Amalekite flocks and cattle, blaming it on the men who followed him into battle. He justifies his behavior by saying that he wants to honor God with the tainted plunder. Even after Samuel confronts him about his sin, Saul is more concerned about appearances before the people than his connection to God.



What is the most important lesson that you take away from examining this picture of Saul's heart?

This snapshot of Saul's heart does more than serve as a warning to us. Embedded in the picture is the Light that continually calls Saul, and each of us, to be His.

Fill in the chart using the passages to detail what they reveal about God's heart.


Scripture Snapshot	A Picture of God's Heart
I Samuel 15:2	
I Samuel 15:11	
I Samuel 15:22	
I Samuel 15:29	

Do you see God's faithfulness highlighted in the midst of Saul's rebellion? He remembers a promise made centuries before to Moses and the Israelites and announces that this is the time to answer the evil that was visited on His people. Our Lord keeps every promise. His justice and righteousness comfort His people as they see His mighty hand bring them victory. Through this moment God declares what brings Him delight. He longs for hearts humbled in obedience and lives surrendered to His will. These are more precious to Him than outward parades of sacrifices. His glory shines with His truthfulness and integrity. He is steadfast and sure, unchanging in His nature and certain in His character. We can rest securely in the unfailing heart of our God.



Perhaps most poignant in this picture is the way our sin affects the heart of God. God's heart breaks over sin. He is grieved when rebellion defines our actions and self-focus fills our hearts. He is touched by the actions and intentions of those He calls His own. He delights in our devotion and grieves at our disobedience. Our hearts have a unique impact on the heart of God.

Echoing His Heartbeat: The Life of David

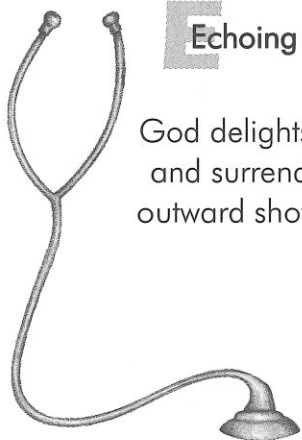
 What impact does it make on your heart to know that God is touched by your actions and choices today?

Read John 14:15. What does our obedience declare about our hearts?

Perhaps the most important lesson we learn from Saul is the value that God places on our obedience. Obedience is our faith translated into action. It is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. Our obedience to His will honors Him and testifies to the world about our transformed lives.

Because his heart is hardened by disobedience, the kingdom is torn from Saul's hands. Though the pages have turned quickly, approximately 25 years have passed since Saul was anointed king over Israel. During this time, the Spirit of the Lord has been with him, and he has had the advantage of God's counsel. Now all of that dramatically changes. Although Saul will remain king for another 15 years, God's heart has already gone in search of one whose heartbeat echoes His own. He finds him — in the pastureland of Bethlehem.

Heart Check



Echoing the Eternal

God delights in obedience and surrender more than outward shows of sacrifice.

Keeping Your Eye on the King

Saul chooses to follow his own wisdom and hardens his heart to the voice of the Lord.

Growing with God

Examine your obedience in the light of John 14:15 and Mark 12:30-31.

Name one area of your life in which you struggle with complete obedience. Keeping I John 5:3 close to your heart, what practical commitment will you make to surrendering that piece of your heart to God's delight?

R_x