

Running with the Big Dogs

Royal Flush

Introduction to I Samuel 28-31

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

When playing cards, holding the right ones is vitally important. There are certain hands, such as the royal flush in poker, that will usually beat the rest of the hands. In the study in 1 Samuel this week, Saul and David held the wrong cards, and experienced God's royal flush. However, while it was time for King Saul and Jonathan, his son, to cash in their chips, it simply ushered in a new "game" for David. This was because David was God's choice for king; but, while this was true, he had some growing to do himself. As this final transition began, both Saul and David were holding the wrong cards—Saul turning to a forbidden medium to discern God's will, and David aligning himself with the Philistines in order to avoid Saul's pursuit of him. Neither

of these moves would result in a "winning hand"; God confirmed through the medium that Saul and Jonathan would not only lose their kingdom, but would die in battle the next day. God also allowed David to lose his "place at the table" as the Philistine warriors had him banished from their ranks. God then "upped the ante" by sending Saul and Jonathan into battle the next day against the Philistines, and by permitting the Amalekites to raid David's home town of Ziklag, and take his wealth and families. This led David's men to nearly mutiny on him, but David wisely strengthened himself in the Lord. God then directed him to pursue the Amalekites, and when he did he recovered everything



When you run with God and follow His lead, you will have success in life.

and everyone, and all was well. Finally, God brought Saul and Jonathan to their decreed end—God had accomplished His "royal flush" and overcome two kings—one past (Saul) and one in waiting (Jonathan). In spite of that, God still honored them by allowing the Jabesh-Gileadites to recover their bodies. As this story shows when we hold the wrong cards, God's royal flush always wins.

Study/Discussion Questions for I Samuel 28-31

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

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| 1. Read 28:1-7. What was David's dilemma (v1), and response (v2)? What did Saul face (v4), how did he react (v5), and what was his solution (v7)? Why was each man wrong (see also Lev 19:31)? | |
| 2. From 28:8-14 how did Saul convince the medium to help him (v10), and why was this phony? Who did the woman "bring up" at Saul's request (v13-14)? How can we explain this? | |
| 3. Using 28:15-25 what was Samuel's reaction to Saul (v15), and Saul's answer (v15)? How did Samuel respond (v16-19), and what does this teach? How did Saul react (v20-23)? | |

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I Samuel 28-31 Study Questions (cont)

4. Looking at 29:1-11 how did David's predicament intensify (v1-2), and how did he escape (v3-5)? What did Achish tell David (v6-7, 9-10), and what was David's response (v8)? Do you agree with David's approach?

5. According to 30:1-6 what problem did David and his men face (v1-3), and how did it affect them (v4)? What further problem did it lead to (v5), and how did David deal with it (v6)? What does this teach us?

6. From 30:7-10 what 2 steps did David take to deal with the situation he faced (v7-8, 9-10), and why were both important? Based on v10, how difficult was this 2nd step?

7. Based on 30:11-20 how did God help David 1st (v11-15)? What else did He do for David (v16-17), and what was so amazing about this event (v18-20)? What can we learn from this?

8. In 30:21-31 how was David's reaction to those who stayed behind different from some of his men (v22-24), and why (v23)? Who else did he share with (v26-31)? How can we apply this?

9. Read 31:1-6. What happened to Saul (v3-6) and Jonathan (v2) in the Philistine battle, and why (see 28:18-19)? Why was Saul's death fitting (see 2 Sam 1:5-10) based on his life?

10. According to 31:7-13 what happened to the bodies of Saul and Jonathan (v8-10), and why was this tragic (v9)? Who resolved this problem (v11-13), and how could we follow their example today?

11. Contrast the way Saul tried to solve his last problem (1 Sam 28) with the way David solved his (30:6-10, 21-25). Why was the outcome of each appropriate (30:16-20, 26-30; 31:1-10)?

Scripture to Remember

"But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God."

1 Samuel 30:6

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Life Group Questions

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Tell the group about one of the most meaningful gifts you ever received. What made it so meaningful to you, both then and later?
2. Talk about your "preferred" way of expressing affirmation through physical touch—hug, handshake, slap on back, "holy kiss", etc. Why does this bless us?
3. Share how you encourage those around you with your words. When does the attempt to encourage actually help, and when does it not?
4. Think of someone who really "believes" in you. What does it do for you to know that is true, and how do they communicate that to you?
5. Describe how someone in your life has pictured a great future for you. How have they followed through with helping you achieve that?
6. Discuss specifically how you could pass on the blessing to someone else this week through these 5 ways.