

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 39 OF 104

Bought With a Price

Week 39 of 104 • 38% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	2 Samuel 18–24
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 26–28
Gospels	Mark 8:11–9:13
General New Testament	1 Corinthians 6:1–7:16

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

David is an old man by the end of this week's reading, and everything he touches now carries a price tag. He buys a threshing floor from a man who offers it to him free, and he will not take it, because he refuses to give God anything that costs him nothing. Far to the north at Caesarea Philippi, Peter finally says out loud who Jesus is, and Jesus answers by talking about a cross and asking what a man would take in trade for his own soul. Paul writes to a church treating its bodies like private property and reminds them that they were purchased, and that the receipt was written in blood. And in the middle of all of it David sits down and says that of everything a king could want, he wants one thing.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the "Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study" questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT 2 Samuel 18–24

Grief, Mercy, and Costly Worship

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The rebellion ends in a forest, with Absalom hanging in an oak and Joab disobeying orders to end it. David's cry over his son is one of the most painful sentences in Scripture. Then comes the long business of putting a kingdom back together: Shimei pardoned, Mephibosheth questioned, Barzillai honored, Sheba's revolt crushed. The closing chapters gather David's song of deliverance, his last words, the roll of his mighty men, and finally the census that cost seventy thousand lives and ended at a threshing floor David insisted on paying for.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Joab confronts David in 19:5–7 for mourning Absalom while his soldiers slip back into the city like men ashamed of a victory. Was Joab right, and how do you weigh a father's grief against a king's public responsibility?
2. David numbers the people, and afterward his heart strikes him (24:10). Scripture never says counting is sinful in itself, so talk through what David was actually reaching for and why it offended God.

3. David will not offer to the Lord that which costs him nothing (24:24). Name the places where our worship, our giving, and our service cost us nothing, and discuss what it would take to change that this month.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Second Samuel 22 appears again, with slight differences, as Psalm 18. Read both and list every image David uses for God in the opening verses. Which of them would you never have thought to use?
2. Trace Shimei through 16:5–13, 19:16–23, and 1 Kings 2:8–9. How does David handle a man who cursed him on the worst day of his life, and what does Solomon finally do about it?
3. Compare 2 Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:1. Each names a different source for the census. Read Job 1:6–12 and explain how the two statements fit together.
4. David's last words in 23:1–7 describe a ruler who is just and rules in the fear of God. List the images he uses, then read 2 Samuel 7:12–16 and consider which Son of David finally matches the description.
5. The threshing floor David paid for became the place where the temple was built (2 Chronicles 3:1). Name one specific sacrifice of money, time, or comfort you will make this week that you would ordinarily talk yourself out of, and set the day you will do it.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 26–28

One Thing I Have Desired

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Three psalms of David, all prayed with enemies close by. Psalm 26 asks God to examine him and see that he has walked in integrity and kept bad company at a distance. Psalm 27 opens with one of the boldest lines in the Bible, that the Lord is his light and salvation, narrows to a single desire, then turns unexpectedly anxious before ending with a command to wait. Psalm 28 is a cry to be heard, and praise when he is.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 26 begins with David inviting God to examine him and test his heart and mind. When did you last invite that kind of scrutiny, and what makes the invitation so uncomfortable to offer?
2. Psalm 27:4 names one thing David wants more than anything else a king could have. Read the verse in context and talk about what it would look like for someone in this room to genuinely have one thing.

3. Psalm 27 moves from unshakable confidence in verses 1 through 6 to something far more anxious in verses 7 through 12. Why would the Spirit preserve a prayer that swings like that, and what does that permit us to bring to God?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything David says he has refused to do in Psalm 26:4–5. Which of those choices about company is hardest for you to make?
2. Psalm 27:10 imagines father and mother forsaking him. Read Hebrews 13:5–6 and describe what God promises the person nobody else is holding on to.
3. The word wait closes Psalm 27. Compare verse 14 with Isaiah 40:31 and explain the difference between waiting on God and merely waiting for something to change.
4. In Psalm 28:3–5 David asks God to repay the wicked according to their deeds. Read Romans 12:19 and explain how a Christian may pray honestly about injustice without praying for personal revenge.
5. David asked for one thing. Write down the one thing you have actually been asking God for lately, and name the single change that would move your real desire closer to his.

GOSPELS Mark 8:11–9:13

Confession, Cross, and Glory

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The Pharisees demand a sign and get a sigh instead. Jesus warns about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod, and His own disciples miss it entirely. A blind man at Bethsaida is healed in two stages, the only miracle that comes in installments. Then at Caesarea Philippi Peter says the words the whole book has been building toward, and Jesus begins teaching about suffering and death. Six days later three of them see Him shining on a mountain.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus refuses the sign the Pharisees demand (8:11–12) though He had already done many. What were they really asking for, and why would one more miracle not have moved them?

2. Peter gets the confession exactly right in 8:29 and earns the sharpest rebuke in the Gospel a few verses later. How can a man be right about who Jesus is and badly wrong about what He came to do?
3. In 9:1 Jesus promises that some standing there would not taste death before they saw the kingdom of God come with power. Read Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:1–4, and talk through when that promise was kept.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. The blind man of Bethsaida is healed in two stages (8:22–26). Given where Mark places this story, just before disciples who half see who Jesus is, explain why he may have put it exactly here.
2. Write out the conditions Jesus gives for following Him in 8:34–38, then read Luke 9:23 and note the single word Luke adds to the second condition.
3. Compare Mark 9:1 with Daniel 2:44 and Colossians 1:13. When was the kingdom established, who reigns in it, and where does that leave the idea of a future earthly kingdom?
4. At the transfiguration the Father says of Jesus, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Read Hebrews 1:1–2 and explain why the voice ends with those two words while Moses and Elijah are standing right there.
5. Jesus asks what a man would take in exchange for his own soul (8:37). Name one thing you have been trading pieces of your soul for, and the concrete step you will take this week to stop paying.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT 1 Corinthians 6:1–7:16

Your Body Is Not Your Own

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul is astonished that Christians are suing each other in pagan courts, and asks why they will not rather accept the wrong. Then he lists the kinds of people who will not inherit the kingdom and adds five words that change everything: such were some of you. From there he takes up sexual immorality, argues that the Christian’s body belongs to the Lord by purchase, and moves into practical instruction about marriage, singleness, and life with an unbelieving spouse.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul is stunned that brothers drag one another before unbelieving judges (6:1–8). What is at stake for the church’s reputation, and what do you make of his question, why not rather accept the wrong?

2. First Corinthians 6:9–11 names people who will not inherit the kingdom and then says, “And such were some of you.” Talk about what changed for them, and about the three things Paul says happened in verse 11.
3. In 7:3–5 Paul says neither husband nor wife has authority over his or her own body. That is startling language. How does that mutual claim actually protect a marriage rather than diminish it?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the sins named in 6:9–10, then read Galatians 5:19–21 and note how much overlaps. Why would Paul keep putting the same list in front of churches?
2. Paul gives several reasons in 6:13–20 why sexual sin is unlike other sins. Trace them and state each one in a single sentence of your own.
3. Read 6:19–20 beside Romans 12:1. If your body was purchased and is now a temple of the Holy Spirit, what claims does that make on your sleep, your appetite, your eyes, and your work?
4. In 7:12–16 Paul instructs a Christian married to an unbeliever. Trace exactly what he tells that believer to do, and explain what he means by saying the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believing one.
5. Paul writes that you are not your own. Name one habit involving your body that would change this week if you actually believed that sentence, and tell one person you are changing it.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: 1 Kings 1–5 · Psalm 29–30 · Mark 9:14–50 · 1 Corinthians 7:17–8:13

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