Thursday Night Football Fellowship: Becoming a Man After God's Heart

A 16-Week, 60-Minute Bible Study for Young Men Ages 19–39

Unit 1: The Making of a Man

Unit Aim: To help young men see how God forms men in hidden places, calls them into courage, strengthens them through spiritual battles, and teaches them to trust Him before they fully understand the road ahead.

Key Theme: David did not become a man after God's heart in public first. God shaped him in private through faithfulness, courage, worship, obedience, and trust.

Unit Memory Verse: "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." — 1 Samuel 16:7

Week 1: Called from Obscurity

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 16:1–13

Big Idea: God often prepares and calls men in places no one else notices. David was overlooked by people, but he was seen by God.

- **Opening Question:** Where do you feel most unseen or underestimated right now?
- **Teaching Point:** David's identity was not built by public approval but by God's choosing. God looks past appearance, status, and résumé to the condition of the heart.
- **Discussion:** What are some ways young men chase visibility instead of faithfulness? What does it look like to be faithful in a hidden season?
- **Challenge:** Choose one unseen responsibility this week and do it with excellence as worship to God.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to build a heart that values His approval more than recognition.

Week 2: Courage over Comfort

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 16:14–23; 17:12–24

Big Idea: Courage is not the absence of fear or inconvenience; it is choosing obedience when comfort would be easier.

- **Opening Question:** What is one area where comfort keeps men from stepping into responsibility?
- **Teaching Point:** David served faithfully before he fought publicly. His courage was formed through ordinary obedience, humility, and willingness to show up.
- **Discussion:** Why is comfort so powerful for men in this season of life? How can small acts of obedience build spiritual courage?
- **Challenge:** Identify one uncomfortable act of obedience God may be calling you to take this week.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God for courage to obey before the outcome is clear.

Week 3: Fighting Giants

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 17:25–54

Big Idea: Giants reveal what a man truly believes about God. David faced Goliath with confidence rooted in God's faithfulness, not his own strength.

- **Opening Question:** What kinds of "giants" do men face today—spiritually, emotionally, relationally, or vocationally?
- **Teaching Point:** David did not minimize the giant; he magnified God. His past experiences with the lion and bear gave him confidence that God would be faithful again.
- **Discussion:** What voices try to discourage men from stepping into battle? How can remembering God's past faithfulness strengthen present courage?
- **Challenge:** Write down one giant you are facing and one truth about God that speaks louder than that giant.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God for faith to face battles with His strength instead of self-reliance.

Week 4: Learning to Trust God

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 18:1–16; Psalm 27:1–3

Big Idea: Trusting God means remaining faithful when favor, pressure, relationships, and uncertainty all test the heart.

- **Opening Question:** When life changes quickly, what do you usually trust first—control, people, success, or God?
- **Teaching Point:** After David's victory, his life became more complicated, not easier. Trust was not just needed in battle; it was needed in success, conflict, and uncertainty.
- **Discussion:** Why can success be as spiritually dangerous as struggle? What habits help a man keep trusting God when circumstances shift?
- **Challenge:** Practice one trust-building rhythm this week: prayer before decisions, Scripture before reaction, or surrender before striving.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to form steady faith in changing seasons.

Unit 1 Leader Notes

- Keep the tone honest, practical, and direct. Young men need space to talk about pressure, identity, fear, responsibility, temptation, and purpose without pretending.
- Emphasize formation over performance. David's public victories came after private preparation.
- Invite participation, but do not force vulnerability. Use questions that allow men to share at the level they are ready for.
- End each week with one clear action step so the study moves from information to transformation.

Unit 2: Character Before the Crown

Unit Aim: To help young men understand that God develops character before He increases influence. David's path to the throne required loyal friendship, honor under pressure, patient trust, and integrity in private places.

Key Theme: Before David wore the crown, God tested the condition of his heart. The waiting season was not wasted; it was the training ground for the kind of man he would become.

Unit Memory Verse: "May the Lord therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand." — 1 Samuel 24:15

Week 5: Friendship — Jonathan

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 18:1–4; 20:12–17, 30–42

Big Idea: Godly friendship strengthens a man's calling instead of competing with it. Jonathan loved David enough to support what God was doing in him, even when it cost Jonathan personally.

- **Opening Question:** What makes male friendship difficult to build and maintain in this season of life?
- **Teaching Point:** Jonathan's friendship with David was marked by covenant loyalty, honesty, sacrifice, and spiritual encouragement. He did not use David's calling as a threat to his own identity.
- **Discussion:** What is the difference between a friendship built on convenience and one built on covenant loyalty? How can men encourage each other without comparison or competition?
- **Challenge:** Reach out to one man this week with intentional encouragement, accountability, or prayer.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to make you the kind of friend who strengthens another man's walk with Him.

Week 6: Honor Toward Saul

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 24:1–12; Romans 12:17–21

Big Idea: A man after God's heart refuses to let another person's wrong behavior become an excuse for his own disobedience.

- **Opening Question:** How do men usually respond when they feel disrespected, overlooked, or treated unfairly?
- **Teaching Point:** David had a chance to harm Saul, but he chose honor over revenge. Honor did not mean Saul was right; it meant David trusted God to judge rightly.
- **Discussion:** What is the difference between honor and approval? Why is revenge tempting when we feel justified? How does trusting God change the way we respond to difficult authority?
- **Challenge:** Identify one relationship where you need to respond with restraint, respect, or forgiveness instead of reaction.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to give you self-control, humility, and trust when you are treated unfairly.

Week 7: Waiting on God

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 26:7–12; Psalm 37:3–7

Big Idea: Waiting on God is not passive. It is active faithfulness while refusing to force open doors God has not opened.

- **Opening Question:** What makes waiting difficult for young men who want direction, progress, or success?

- **Teaching Point:** David had more than one opportunity to take the throne by force, but he refused to shortcut God's timing. Waiting tested whether he wanted God's promise in God's way.
- **Discussion:** What are common shortcuts men take when they are tired of waiting? How can impatience damage character, relationships, or calling?
- **Challenge:** Name one area where you are tempted to force an outcome. Surrender it to God in prayer each day this week.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God for patience, endurance, and faithfulness in the waiting season.

Week 8: Integrity When Nobody Is Watching

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 24:3–7; Psalm 15:1–5

Big Idea: Integrity is proven when a man has opportunity, privacy, and justification—but still chooses what honors God.

- **Opening Question:** Why is private integrity so important for men who want public influence?
- **Teaching Point:** David's men encouraged him to take advantage of the moment, but David's conscience was sensitive before God. Integrity meant refusing to do the wrong thing even when others could make it sound reasonable.
- **Discussion:** What private areas most shape a man's public life? How do excuses, secrecy, or peer pressure weaken integrity?
- **Challenge:** Choose one private habit, thought pattern, or decision area to bring into the light through prayer, Scripture, or trusted accountability.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to form consistency between who you are in public and who you are in private.

Unit 2 Leader Notes

- Frame this unit around formation, not frustration. David's delay was part of God's development.
- Help the group see that character is built in relationships, conflict, waiting, and hidden decisions.
- Be clear that honoring authority does not mean ignoring abuse, enabling harm, or refusing wise boundaries. David honored Saul while still keeping distance when necessary.
- Challenge men to connect private integrity with future leadership, marriage, work, ministry, and influence.

Unit 3: The Battles Within

Unit Aim: To help young men recognize that some of the greatest battles a man faces are not public enemies but private desires, hidden compromises, unconfessed sin, and the consequences that follow.

Key Theme: David's failure with Bathsheba shows that even men after God's heart can fall when they stop guarding their hearts. But his repentance also shows that God meets honest confession with mercy, restoration, and a renewed heart.

Unit Memory Verse: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." — Psalm 51:10

Week 9: Temptation

Scripture Focus: 2 Samuel 11:1–5; James 1:13–15

Big Idea: Temptation often gains power when a man is idle, isolated, entitled, or spiritually unguarded.

- **Opening Question:** What situations make temptation easier to excuse or harder to resist?
- **Teaching Point:** David's fall began before the act itself. He was not where he should have been, he looked too long, and he used his position to pursue what was not his.
- **Discussion:** What warning signs show that a man is becoming spiritually careless? How do boredom, secrecy, pride, or entitlement make temptation stronger?
- **Challenge:** Identify one pattern that weakens your resistance to temptation and make one practical change this week.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God for awareness, humility, and strength to resist temptation early.

Week 10: Lust

Scripture Focus: 2 Samuel 11:2–4; Matthew 5:27–30; Job 31:1

Big Idea: Lust trains a man to use what God calls him to honor. A man after God's heart must learn to guard his eyes, thoughts, desires, and actions.

- **Opening Question:** Why is lust often treated casually even though it deeply shapes the heart?
- **Teaching Point:** David did not simply notice Bathsheba; he pursued what his desire demanded. Lust becomes dangerous when desire is fed, protected, and acted on instead of brought under God's authority.
- **Discussion:** How does lust distort the way men see women, themselves, and God? What boundaries or rhythms help a man pursue purity without pretending the battle is easy?
- **Challenge:** Make a clear purity plan this week: remove one source of compromise, confess to a trusted brother, or establish a boundary before temptation comes.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to purify your desires and teach you to honor others as image-bearers.

Week 11: Repentance

Scripture Focus: 2 Samuel 12:1–13; Psalm 51:1–12

Big Idea: Repentance is more than feeling bad. It is agreeing with God about sin, turning from it, and returning to Him with honesty and humility.

- **Opening Question:** What is the difference between being sorry you got caught and being truly repentant?
- **Teaching Point:** Nathan confronted David with truth, and David did not defend himself. Psalm 51 shows a man who stops hiding, names his sin, asks for mercy, and desires a clean heart.
- **Discussion:** Why do men often hide, minimize, or excuse sin? What role do confession, accountability, and godly confrontation play in repentance?
- **Challenge:** Spend time with Psalm 51 this week and write a personal prayer of confession and surrender.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God for a soft heart, honest confession, and the courage to turn back to Him.

Week 12: Consequences

Scripture Focus: 2 Samuel 12:10–14; Galatians 6:7–9

Big Idea: God's forgiveness is real, but sin still carries consequences. Maturity means receiving mercy while also taking responsibility for what sin has damaged.

- **Opening Question:** Why do people sometimes expect forgiveness to remove every consequence?
- **Teaching Point:** David was forgiven, but the effects of his sin remained painful and far-reaching. God's mercy does not erase the seriousness of sin; it gives a man the grace to face truth, take responsibility, and walk forward differently.
- **Discussion:** What kinds of consequences can follow hidden sin? How can a man respond to consequences with humility instead of resentment?
- **Challenge:** Identify one area where you need to take responsibility, repair trust, or make a wise change before consequences deepen.
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God for humility to receive correction, wisdom to rebuild, and strength to walk in