

David: A Man After God's Own Heart, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 12: The Sweet Psalmist and the Son of David

2 Samuel 23:1–5; Psalm 23; Acts 13:22–23

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This final lesson gathers the whole study and lifts the class from David to David's greater Son. Historically, the passages bring us to the end of David's life: his last words, in which he calls himself the sweet psalmist of Israel and rests his hope on God's everlasting covenant (2 Samuel 23:1–5); the beloved twenty-third psalm, in which the shepherd-king presents himself as a dependent sheep and God as his faithful Shepherd; and Paul's declaration in Acts 13:22–23 that God brought from David's offspring the promised Savior, Jesus. The doctrinal and spiritual stakes are David's legacy as a worshiper, the shepherding care of God, the grounding of hope in God's covenant faithfulness rather than human merit, and, climactically, the fulfillment of the whole story in Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Good Shepherd, and the reigning King.

The teacher should treat this lesson as a capstone that draws the threads of the entire study together. Every previous lesson has, in some way, pointed beyond David: the anointed shepherd, the champion who won a victory for his people, the rejected one who suffered before he reigned, the king of the everlasting throne, the sinner who was forgiven, the worshiper who gave us songs. All of these find their fulfillment in Christ. The aim is to help the class see the unity of the story and to lift their eyes from a flawed but faithful man to the perfect Son of David who fulfills everything David foreshadowed.

Aim at worshipful response and lasting formation. This is the last lesson, so the teacher should help students consolidate what God has been doing in them across the study and carry it forward. Present the fulfillment in Christ with clarity and joy, consistent with the earlier lessons: Jesus is the promised Savior from David's line, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life, and the King now reigning on David's throne. Send the class out not merely admiring David but worshiping and following David's Lord, with David's songs on their lips and David's hope, grounded in God's covenant faithfulness fulfilled in Christ, settled in their hearts.

Question 1

Student Question:

In his last words, David calls himself "the sweet psalmist of Israel" and speaks of the Spirit of the LORD speaking by him (23:1–2). What does it teach us about David's life and legacy that, through every season, he turned his experience into worship, and what does this reveal about the place of worship and Scripture-shaped song in the life of God's people?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

David's self-description in his last words is worth pausing over: "the sweet psalmist of Israel," the one by whom "the Spirit of the LORD speaks" (23:1–2). The teacher should help the class see what this reveals about David's whole life. From the pasture to the deathbed, David turned his experience into worship, and through him the Spirit gave the people of God a treasury of inspired song.

Draw out the legacy of a worshiping life. David did not merely have religious moments; he made worship the running response of his life. His joys became praise, his fears became prayers, his failures became confessions, his deliverances became thanksgivings. The result is the Psalms, which have shaped the worship and comforted the hearts of God's people for three thousand years. A life poured out in worship leaves a long legacy.

Note the place of Scripture-shaped song. Because David wrote under the Spirit of the LORD, his psalms are not merely personal expression but the word of God, given to teach us how to speak to God. The teacher can highlight how the Psalms train our own worship, giving us words for praise, lament, repentance, and trust that we would not find on our own.

Apply it to the class. We are formed by what we worship and how. The teacher should help the class see worship not as one compartment of life but as its proper, running response, and should commend the practice of letting Scripture, especially the Psalms, shape that worship. A life turned habitually Godward in praise becomes, like David's, a fountain of blessing to others.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- David's life as a life turned habitually into worship
- The legacy of a worshiping life: the inspired treasury of the Psalms
- Worship as the running response to all of life, not isolated moments
- Scripture-shaped song as the word of God training our worship
- Being formed by what and how we worship

Discussion Prompts

- What does it teach us that David turned every season of life into worship?
- How do the Psalms train and shape our own worship?
- What would it look like to make worship the running response of your life?

Question 2

Student Question:

David made a lifelong habit of turning his joys, fears, failures, and deliverances into worship offered back to God. As you look at your own life, are you learning to bring the whole of your experience, the good and the hard, to God in worship? What would it look like to make worship the running response of your life, as David did?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question applies David's worshiping life to the student. The aim is to move worship from compartment to lifestyle, bringing the whole of experience, good and hard, to God.

Help the class examine their patterns. Many bring only certain things to God in worship, the polished, the positive, the Sunday self, while the fears, failures, and frustrations go elsewhere. David brought everything: he praised and he lamented, he rejoiced and he confessed. His worship was as wide as his life.

Then call for a fuller practice. Invite each student to consider what they tend to leave out of worship and one way they will begin bringing the whole of their experience to God this week, perhaps by praying a psalm that matches where they actually are. Worship grows when it becomes the honest, running response of the whole life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Moving worship from a compartment to a lifestyle
- Bringing the whole of experience, good and hard, to God
- What we tend to leave out of worship
- Praying the Psalms to match where we actually are
- Worship as the honest, running response of the whole life

Discussion Prompts

- Are you learning to bring all of your life, good and hard, to God in worship?
- What do you tend to leave out of your worship?
- How could you make worship the running response of your life this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Psalm 23 opens, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (23:1). Drawing on his own years as a shepherd, what is David teaching us about who God is and how He cares for His people, and why is it significant that the shepherd-king presents himself here simply as a dependent sheep?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Psalm 23 is so familiar that the teacher must work to recover its freshness. Its opening line is the whole gospel of God's care in miniature: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." David, who had kept sheep, knew exactly what a shepherd is and does, and he turns the picture around to describe God's care for him.

Draw out the shepherd imagery. A shepherd provides (green pastures), refreshes (still waters), restores (the soul), guides (paths of righteousness), protects (rod and staff), and stays close

through danger. David knew this work from the inside, and he confesses that God does all of it for him. The teacher can walk the class through the psalm's images as a portrait of how God cares for His people.

Highlight the significance of the role reversal. The powerful shepherd-king presents himself not as a shepherd here but as a sheep, dependent, needing to be led, fed, and protected. This is striking humility from a man of David's stature, and it teaches that the proper posture of every person before God, however great, is dependence. The greatest king is still a sheep before the LORD.

Apply it to trust. The promise "I shall not want" is not that we will have every desire gratified but that the Shepherd will supply all we truly need. The teacher should help the class rest in this care, learning to live as those who are led and provided for by a faithful Shepherd rather than as those who must secure everything for themselves.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Psalm 23 as a portrait of God's shepherding care
- The shepherd who provides, refreshes, restores, guides, and protects
- The shepherd-king presenting himself as a dependent sheep
- Dependence as the proper posture of every person before God
- "I shall not want" as the supply of all we truly need

Discussion Prompts

- What does the shepherd image teach us about how God cares for His people?
- Why is it significant that the king presents himself as a sheep?
- What does it mean that with the LORD as our shepherd we shall not want?

Question 4

Student Question:

David, a powerful king, was content to call himself a sheep and to depend entirely on his Shepherd. Where do you struggle to live as a dependent sheep, trusting God to provide, lead, and protect, rather than relying on your own strength and control? Where do you most need to say, and mean, "I shall not want"?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question applies the dependent-sheep posture to the student. The aim is to surface where we resist dependence and to learn to trust the Shepherd's provision, leading, and protection.

Help the class name where dependence is hard. For many it is provision (anxiety about needs), for others guidance (insisting on their own way), for others protection (the compulsion to control). These are the places we struggle to be sheep, preferring to be our own shepherds.

Then call for trust. To say “I shall not want” and mean it is to entrust a specific area to the Shepherd’s care. Invite each student to name where they most resist living as a dependent sheep and one concrete way they will trust the Shepherd there this week, releasing their grip on provision, control, or their own way.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Surfacing where we resist dependence on God
- Hard areas: provision, guidance, protection, control
- Preferring to be our own shepherds
- Entrusting a specific area to the Shepherd’s care
- Saying and meaning ‘I shall not want’

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you struggle to live as a dependent sheep?
- Is it provision, guidance, or protection that you find hardest to trust God with?
- Where do you most need to say, and mean, ‘I shall not want’ this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Psalm 23 promises God’s presence even in “the valley of the shadow of death” and a table prepared “in the presence of my enemies” (23:4–5). What does this teach us about the kind of care God gives, that He does not always remove the dark valley or the enemies, but is present with us in the midst of them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question draws out two of the psalm’s most realistic promises. The Shepherd leads through “the valley of the shadow of death” (not around it) and prepares a table “in the presence of my enemies” (not after they are gone). The teacher should help the class see the kind of care this describes.

Note what God does and does not promise. He does not promise a life without dark valleys or without enemies. He promises His presence in the valley (“I will fear no evil, for you are with me”) and His provision in the very presence of opposition. The comfort is not the absence of trouble but the presence of the Shepherd within it.

Connect this to the whole arc of the study. David's own life proved it. God did not spare him the wilderness, the crisis, or the consequences, but He was with him through all of them. Psalm 23 is the distilled testimony of a man who had walked many valleys and found the Shepherd faithful in each. The teacher can tie this back to earlier lessons on trusting God under pressure.

Apply it as realistic comfort. The teacher should help the class set right expectations: following the Shepherd does not exempt us from valleys and enemies, but it guarantees we never face them alone. This is a sturdier comfort than the false promise of an untroubled life, because it holds even when, especially when, the valley is darkest.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's presence in the valley, not exemption from it
- A table in the presence of enemies, not after they are gone
- Comfort as the Shepherd's presence within trouble
- David's whole life proving this kind of care
- A sturdier comfort than the false promise of an untroubled life

Discussion Prompts

- What kind of care does God promise in the valley and before our enemies?
- Why is His presence a sturdier comfort than the absence of trouble?
- How does this fit what we have seen across David's life?

Question 6

Student Question:

There are valleys and enemies in every life that God does not simply remove. Where do you most need to know the Shepherd's presence with you right now, in some valley or in the presence of some enemy? How does the promise that He is with you, rather than that He will spare you every hardship, change the way you face it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question applies the Shepherd's presence to the student's present valley or enemy. The aim is to help them receive the real comfort of His presence rather than longing only for escape.

Help the class identify where they most need the Shepherd now: a grief, a fear, a conflict, an illness, an opposition. Then help them shift their hope from mere removal of the trouble to the promise of His presence within it, which is what the psalm actually offers.

Then call for a reorientation. How does it change the facing of a hard thing to know the Shepherd is with us in it? Invite each student to name their current valley or enemy and to lay

hold this week of the promise, not that God will necessarily remove it, but that He is present with them in it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Identifying our present valley or enemy
- Shifting hope from removal of trouble to the Shepherd's presence
- Receiving the comfort the psalm actually offers
- How God's presence changes the facing of hard things
- Laying hold of presence rather than only escape

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you most need to know the Shepherd's presence right now?
- How does His being with you, rather than sparing you, change how you face it?
- What would it look like to lay hold of that presence this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

David rests his final hope not on his own record but on God's covenant: "he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure" (23:5). Given all this study has shown of David's failures, why is it significant that he grounds his hope in God's faithfulness rather than his own, and what does this teach us about where our own assurance must finally rest?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question fastens on the ground of David's final hope (23:5): "he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure." After a study that has not hidden David's failures, it is striking and instructive that he rests his hope not on his own record but on God's covenant faithfulness.

Draw out the significance. David's house was deeply flawed; his own sin had scarred it. If his hope had rested on his performance, it would have been a frail hope indeed. But the covenant did not depend on David's perfection; it depended on God, who is faithful. So David could call it secure, not because he was secure in himself, but because God keeps His word.

Connect this to the whole study and to the gospel. The covenant David rested on finds its fulfillment in Christ, and the believer's assurance rests on the same ground: not our record, but God's faithfulness to His promises in Jesus. The teacher should make clear that this is not a license for carelessness (the study has guarded against that throughout) but the proper location of our confidence, in God rather than in ourselves.

Apply it as the foundation of assurance. The teacher should help the class see that a hope built on personal performance will always waver, because our performance wavers. A hope built on God's covenant faithfulness is secure, because He does not change. This is where every believer's final confidence must rest, not in how well we have done, but in how faithful God is.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- David grounding his final hope in God's covenant, not his record
- The covenant secure because it rests on God's faithfulness, not David's perfection
- Assurance located in God's promises fulfilled in Christ
- Not a license for carelessness, but the right location of confidence
- A hope built on performance wavers; a hope built on God's faithfulness is secure

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it significant that David rests his hope on God's faithfulness, not his own?
- Where must our own assurance finally rest?
- How is this different from a careless presumption on grace?

Question 8

Student Question:

At the end of your life, what will you be resting your hope on? Be honest about whether you are quietly leaning on your own record, your good deeds, or your religious performance. What would it mean to rest your final hope, as David did, wholly on God's covenant faithfulness, now fulfilled for us in Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question presses the ground of hope into the student's own heart, asking what they are really resting on for eternity. The aim is to expose quiet self-reliance and to relocate hope onto God's faithfulness in Christ.

Help the class be honest. Many believers, if they examine their hearts, find that their assurance secretly rises and falls with their performance, good week, more confidence; bad week, more doubt. This reveals a hope resting on self rather than on God. David shows a better foundation.

Then call for relocation. Invite each student to consider what they are actually leaning on for their final hope, and to consciously rest it, as David did, on God's covenant faithfulness now fulfilled in Christ. This both humbles (it is not our record) and steadies (it is His faithfulness), and it is the only foundation that will hold at the end.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Examining what we really rest on for eternity

- Assurance that rises and falls with performance as misplaced
- Relocating hope onto God's faithfulness in Christ
- A foundation that both humbles and steadies
- The only ground that will hold at the end

Discussion Prompts

- What are you really resting your final hope on?
- Are you quietly leaning on your own record or religious performance?
- What would it mean to rest your hope wholly on God's faithfulness in Christ?

Question 9

Student Question:

Paul declares in the synagogue, "Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised" (Acts 13:22–23), identifying Jesus as the promised Son of David. Bringing together what we have seen, the anointed shepherd, the everlasting throne, and the shepherd's heart of Psalm 23, how does David's whole life point forward to Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, and the King now reigning? How should the certainty that Jesus is this promised Savior shape the way we live?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the climactic doctrinal block of the lesson and of the whole study, and it gathers every thread into Christ. Paul's declaration in the synagogue is the key: "Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised" (Acts 13:22–23). Jesus is the promised Son of David, and in Him the entire story finds its goal.

Draw the threads together for the class, lesson by lesson. The overlooked shepherd anointed in obscurity points to Jesus, born in David's Bethlehem and anointed by the Spirit. The champion who won the battle for his people points to Christ, who defeated sin and death on our behalf. The rejected one who suffered before he reigned points to the Savior despised before His exaltation. The king of the everlasting throne points to Christ, now reigning at God's right hand. The shepherd's heart of Psalm 23 points to the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). The teacher should help the class see that David's whole life, in all its faith and even through its failures, was pointing beyond itself to a greater Son.

State the fulfillment clearly and consistently with the earlier lessons. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who did what no shepherd before Him could do: He laid down His life for the sheep and took it up again. He is the Son of David reigning now on the everlasting throne, having been raised and seated at God's right hand (Acts 2:29–36; Luke 1:31–33). He is the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star (Revelation 22:16). The promise made to a shepherd-king is kept in full in Christ, and the kingdom is His present reign, not a postponed earthly hope. The teacher

should present this with joy and confidence as the destination the whole study has been traveling toward.

Then press the application: how should the certainty that Jesus is this promised Savior shape our lives? It calls us to follow the Good Shepherd, to live as subjects of the reigning King, to rest our hope on the God who keeps His promises, and to give ourselves wholly to the Son of David who gave Himself for us. The teacher should help the class see that knowing David's story rightly is not finally about David at all; it is about being drawn to trust, worship, and follow David's Lord. End by lifting the class's eyes fully to Christ, in whom every promise of God finds its Yes.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Jesus as the promised Son of David and Savior (Acts 13:22–23)
- David's whole life pointing beyond itself to a greater Son
- The anointed shepherd, champion, rejected one, and king all fulfilled in Christ
- Jesus the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11)
- The Son of David reigning now on the everlasting throne (Acts 2:29–36; Luke 1:31–33)
- The kingdom as Christ's present reign, not a postponed earthly hope
- Living as followers of the Good Shepherd and subjects of the reigning King

Discussion Prompts

- How does David's whole life point forward to Jesus, the Son of David?
- In what ways is Jesus the Good Shepherd and the reigning King that David foreshadowed?
- How should the certainty that Jesus is the promised Savior shape the way we live?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across this whole study of David's life, from the pasture to the last words. Name one specific way you sense Jesus, the Son of David, forming you through all you have seen. What is the single most important truth from David's story that you want to carry with you for the rest of your walk with the Lord?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone question closes the entire study and turns it toward a lasting response. The class has traveled with David from the pasture to his last words, and has seen at every turn that his life pointed to Christ. Now the aim is to consolidate and carry forward what God has done across these twelve lessons.

Encourage each student to name one specific, lasting takeaway, not a vague good feeling. For one it may be that God looks on the heart; for another, that the battle is the Lord's; for another,

the clean heart God gives the broken; for another, the certainty that the Son of David reigns. The value is in one truth that will continue to shape them long after the study ends.

Close by lifting the class's eyes from David to David's Lord one final time. The whole point of studying this flawed but faithful man has been to be drawn to the perfect Son who fulfills everything David foreshadowed. Send the class out not merely knowing David's story but following David's Shepherd-King, with His songs on their lips, His care over their lives, and His everlasting kingdom as their home.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Consolidating the formation of the whole study
- Naming one specific, lasting takeaway
- Carrying a truth forward beyond the study
- Being drawn from David to David's Lord
- Following the Shepherd-King with His songs and His care

Discussion Prompts

- Where has God most deeply touched your heart across this study?
- What is the single most important truth you want to carry forward?
- How will following the Son of David shape the rest of your walk with Him?