

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – August 28, 2022

Theme: Lessons from the life of David Topic: Godly versus Selfish Ambition

Main Texts: 2 Samuel 2:1-32

Key verse: 2 Samuel 2:1a – *“In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord. “Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?” he asked”* (NIV)

INTRODUCTION: We continue our study series on “Lessons from the life of David.” And today’s study looks at godly vs selfish ambition. Ambition is the yearning for success. The Cambridge Dictionary defines ambition as a strong wish to achieve something. It could be a burning desire to be successful, rich, or powerful. In 1 Samuel 16:12-13, God directed prophet Samuel to anoint David as king in Saul’s stead. And for over 10 years, King Saul sought to take David’s life to keep the kingship from leaving his family. To save his life and those of his family, David eventually sought asylum with the Philistines, Israel’s arch enemies! Eventually, King Saul died, along with Jonathan, the crown prince. Following the death of Saul and Jonathan, David began the process of returning to the land of his people. Following his return to the land of Judah, the people of Judah came and anointed David king over them. Meanwhile, Abner, Saul’s military commander installed one of Saul’s sons as king over the rest of Israel.

1. Read Philippians 2:3-4; Colossians 3:23; James 3:16 (a) According to these verses, what are the basic factors which differentiate between godly and selfish ambition? (b) Let participants trace the actions of the three principal actors in 2 Samuel 2:1-35 and identify whose ambitions were godly or selfish (c) Is it possible to serve in the Church or in God’s name, and yet be pursuing selfish ambition? Please explain.

Ambition, by itself is neither good nor evil. It all depends on the motive behind it. If we had no ambition, we would never achieve anything. However, a distinguishing characteristic of godly ambition is that it is God-centered, whereas selfish ambition is self-centered. Godly ambition is focused on selfless service to God and humanity. After King Saul died, David did not rush to claim the crown which was duly his. Instead, he waited and sought God’s permission, as well as directions as to which place to return to. God guided him and he faithfully obeyed. And at the right time, the people of Judah came and anointed him king. But before long, Joab, the commander of King David’s army, leaves Hebron for Gibeon to pick a fight with Abner, Saul’s military commander wishing to forcefully get the rest of Israel to recognize David as king.

2. (a) How did David exemplify godly ambition in 2 Samuel 2:1-7? (b) Read Romans 15:20; 2 Corinthians 8:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:11. What are some recommended godly ambitions and how would these play out in the times we live in? (c) Read Ephesians 5:15-16 (AMPC). How does one become a person of godly ambitions? Let participants share actions and attitudes which have helped them maintain godly ambition.

We work hard in our careers, our lifestyles—and even our churches—to guarantee success. These are not necessarily bad if they are not tainted by selfish ambitions. It must have been this desire to be the top dog which motivated Joab to try to unify the two nations of Israel – Judah and Israel. All he got for his effort was the death of hundreds of good soldiers on both sides, including his beloved younger brother. Because of our sinful nature, the best of us can easily and effortlessly drift into pursuing selfish ambitions. However, God’s word does not provide us any leeway for seeking our own glory. In Haggai 1-7-10, God pointed this out to the people of Israel. This should be our proper response also today. We must repent from every selfish ambition when the Holy Spirit convicts us of that and pursue godly ambitions to His praise and glory.

3. (a) What are some ways selfish ambition manifest in a believer’s life? Let one or two participants share instances where they have seen or experienced the brunt of selfish ambition. (b) Read Haggai 1:9-12, what should we do if the Holy Spirit is pointing out an area of selfish ambition in our lives? (c) How do we keep ourselves from slipping into selfish ambitions?

Prayer: *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting, in Jesus’ name, amen.*