STORIES AND RITUALS

LESSON 7

Stories & Rituals: The Bible in Broad Strokes

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David and His Descendants

Texts: **1 & 2 Samuel**

Big Idea: **We seek and find God's own heart.**

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

1. Practice searching for something by completing a group scavenger hunt.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of seeking God's heart by engaging in a telling of the story of David.
3. Demonstrate seeking God's heart by sharing their thoughts through a hands-on ritual.

ACTIVITY (TIME)	MATERIALS NEEDED
Dive In (10 minutes) **Group Check-In**	• Nothing
Community Builder (15 minutes) **Five Minute Scavenger Hunt**	• Copy of Lesson Sheet 7.1 • Pencils or pens • Stopwatch or clock
The Story (15 minutes) **David and His Descendants**	• Copy of Lesson Sheet 7.2
The Ritual (15 minutes) **Seeking God's Heart**	• Soft, instrumental music (optional) • Method for playing music (optional) • Play dough or clay
Dig Deeper (10 minutes) **Songs After God's Own Heart**	• Bibles • Pens or pencils • Paper
Wrap it Up (5 minutes) **Closing Prayer**	• Nothing

LESSON OVERVIEW

What's the Story?

Today your group will explore the story of King David, including his descendants. This is a long story; it takes up many books of the Bible! At the heart of this story is the narrative of a monarch who trusted, obeyed, and sought out God's presence in his life.

David ascended to the throne after the death of King Saul, who during his lifetime drifted away from the presence and commandments of God. David was anointed by Samuel during Saul's reign to become Israel's next great ruler. David's monarchy was not perfect, however, nor was David himself a perfect king. Violence, struggles with authority, and even adultery hindered David from perfection. However, even in his brokenness, David sought God's love, presence, and forgiveness in his life.

God makes a covenant in 2 Samuel 7, in which God promises to bless David's descendents, continue to be present in their lives, and bring God's kingdom to earth one day. God remains faithful to this covenant for David's descendants, helping Israel survive political turmoil and exile. Twenty-eight generations later, Jesus enters David's family tree and continues today to show us how we can seek after God in our lives.

What's the "Big Idea?"

Today's lesson focuses on the big idea that *we seek and find God's own heart.* Like David, we don't lead perfect lives. Sometimes our words and actions drive us away from God and from other people. However, through our own study, prayer, and practice, we seek for God's healing presence, love, and forgiveness. We also seek after God's heart.

What's the Symbol?

There are many objects or things that we use to help us seek after God's heart. Gather a Bible, hymnal, prayer book, photos of church fellowship, and other things that you might use to seek God's faithfulness in your life.

What's the Ritual?

Today's ritual will invite participants to think about how they seek God's heart. Then, each person will make a heart out of play dough or clay and share their thoughts while offering these hearts to God. Finally, the group will re-dedicate themselves to searching for God in their lives.

Setting Up Your Space

Set up your "altar" area. Set up a table and cover it with fabric or linen. On the table, place some candles, a cross, and the objects you will use as today's symbols. Place your materials for the ritual nearby for easy access during the lesson.

DIVE IN
(10 MINUTES)

Group Check-In

Materials:

- Nothing

During the session:

- Open your session with a quick prayer. Use this one or a prayer of your own:
  Holy Lord, open our eyes, ears, and hearts to see your love and faithfulness in the world around us. Help us see your love for us in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- **Let's start our time together by sharing some of the great and not-so-great things that have happened to us this week. What were the high points and low points of your week?** Go around the group and invite everyone to share.

COMMUNITY BUILDER
(15 MINUTES)

Five Minute Scavenger Hunt

Materials:

- Copies of Lesson Sheet 7.1
- Pencils or pens
- Stopwatch or clock

Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 7.1 for every 3-4 students in your group.
- Set boundaries for where students can go to complete the hunt. Be ready to articulate these boundaries to your group.

During the session:

- **Say: Today we are going to begin our time together by searching for something. Let's split into small groups and do a scavenger hunt together!**
- Split students into small groups of 3-4 students each. Hand each group a copy of Lesson Sheet 7.1 and a pencil or pen.
- **Your goal is to complete this scavenger hunt in five minutes or less. When you find something, write down what you've found. We'll gather back here in five minutes and share our findings!**
- Set a stopwatch or clock for five minutes. Send groups out to complete the scavenger hunt.
- After five minutes, bring the group back together to share its findings.
- **What are some of the things that you were asked to search for during this activity? Was it easy or hard to find these things?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- **How did your group feel when you found something on your list?** *[Answers will vary.]*

THE STORY (15 MINUTES)

David and His Descendants

Materials:

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 7.2

Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 7.2.
- Practice reading through the story several times so you are familiar with it.

During the session:

- Tell the story on Lesson Sheet 7.2.
- **After the story, ask: What is this story telling us about God?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: God makes a covenant with us; God is always faithful to us, no matter what; God is always with us; God reveals God's self to us when we search for it.]*
- **What is this story telling us about humanity?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: We seek after God's heart; we aren't perfect in our actions, but when we do something wrong we repent and turn to God; we face hardships, but God is still faithful to us.]*
- **What made King David different than King Saul is that David knew to trust and obey God. David's time on the throne wasn't perfect, but he still sought after God's presence, repented, and turned to God for help. God was faithful to David, and God continued to remain faithful to David's descendants, even until the coming of Jesus.**

THE RITUAL (15 MINUTES)

Seeking God's Heart

Materials:

- Soft, instrumental music (optional)
- Play dough or clay
- Method for playing music (optional)

During the session:

- If you are playing music, begin playing it softly.
- **King David sought after God's own heart. He knew that God would always be faithful to, protect, and defend him. As Christians, we also seek after God's heart in many different ways.**
- Show the group the objects you placed on your altar prior to the start of the lesson. **There are many different practices we use as Christians to help us seek God. We read Scripture, worship, pray, spend time in fellowship with other people, and do many other things.**
- Hand each person in the group a copy of Lesson Sheet 7.3. **Think about some things that you do when you seek after God. How do you seek God's presence, love and forgiveness?**
- Take out the play dough or clay. **I am going to hand each of you some play dough. As you reflect, use the dough to make the shape of a heart. Once everyone is finished, we are going to do a little ritual with our hearts.**
- Give the group time to make their hearts and reflect.
- **In a moment, I am going to invite each of you to come up to the altar. As you do, bring your heart. Place your heart on the altar and share one or two ways that you seek after God's heart. As we do this, we will recommit ourselves to lives of faithfulness and love as we continue searching for God's heart.**
- Invite the group to engage in the ritual. It may be easiest for you to begin by sharing your own thoughts and offering your heart first. Then, invite each individual to place their heart on the altar. Encourage the whole group to participate in the ritual.
- **As we leave this place today, think about how you will continue to search after God's heart. Let's take a moment to recommit ourselves to seeking God's presence in our lives through prayer.**
- Pray the following, or say a similar prayer of your own: **God, you are always faithful to us and give us your love and grace. Help us seek after you and find you. Give us the courage to seek after your heart, so that we may always feel your presence in our lives. We ask this through Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

DIG DEEPER
(10 MINUTES)

Songs After God's Own Heart

Materials:

- Pens or pencils
- Bibles
- Paper

During the session:

- **King David is said to have written many of the Psalms that we find in the Bible. In these Psalms, we hear praises and prayers to God. These Psalms might be one of the ways that David sought God's presence in his life. Let's look at one of these Psalms.**

- Have everyone open a Bible and read together Psalm 32. **How does David describe seeking God in this Psalm?** *[Answers will vary.]*

- Hand each person a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. **Sometimes we use songs, poems, or other writings to share how we have seen God's love, grace, and faithfulness in our lives. Take a few minutes to start writing your own song or poem to God—it doesn't need to be long, and you don't have to finish it now. As you write and create, think about ways you can express to others how you have sought after God in your own life.**

- Give the group time to write. After 5-10 minutes, bring the group back together. Invite students to share their writings, if they wish to do so.

WRAP IT UP
(5 MINUTES)

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to share any prayer concerns or requests they may have for the week. Close your time together in prayer. Use the following or pray your own prayer:

Faithful God, you came to David as he sought your presence in his life. Guide and protect us as we continue to seek after your heart in our lives. Grant us the strength and courage to call upon you, so that we might find your presence in the world around us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Lesson Sheet 7.1

Five Minute Scavenger Hunt

With your group, try to find these things in five minutes or less! Once you find something that fits each category, write what you find in the box.

Can you find…

…something old	**…a form of technology**	**…a flat object**	**…something heavy**
…an object of faith	**…a type of book**	**…something new**	**…an object you can use to take a measurement**
…a round object	**…something made with paper**	**…something that can make music**	**…something red**

Lesson Sheet 7.2

David and His Descendants

(A story about the people of Israel)

Israel needed a good, strong king. King Saul, though he was a great ruler, did not listen to and obey God's commands. Drifting away from God hurt him and God's people. The people needed a king who could seek after, listen to, and trust God. God's prophet Samuel searched for a new King—one who would seek after God's heart.

Samuel found this king in the family of Jesse. David, the youngest of Jesse's sons and a simple shepherd boy, was anointed by Samuel to be Israel's next great king. But, David did not become king right away. Instead, he helped Israel defeat the Philistine army. With God by his side, David struck down Goliath and Israel could defeat its enemies. David's success made Saul jealous, and he tried to have David killed. But, with the help of friends, and with God's protection, David continued to thrive and his success grew and grew. David's faithfulness to God showed that he sought after God's heart.

Eventually, Saul died, along with his family. David then rose to the throne and became king. God made a covenant with David, promising David that his descendants would be lifted up and that God's kingdom would be established on earth. In return, David prayed with humility before God, asking for God's blessing on his house and on his people.

Though David was a great leader, his kingship wasn't perfect. David wasn't always perfect. In fact, violence, power struggles, and even adultery kept him from always seeking after God. But, David always sought after God, repenting for his actions and accepting the consequences for what he had done. Sometimes this brought sorrow; but, in time, God remained faithful to David and his family and continued to bless them, time and time again.

In God's covenant with David, God promised great things for David's descendants. This covenant continued long after King David's death. The kingdom of Israel had moments of joy and moments of trial, but as God's people continued to search for God's heart, God continued to be revealed to them. God was with them and remained faithful to them always. And, twenty-eight generations later, God's promise would be fulfilled and God's kingdom would be made on earth—not through a great ruler, but instead through a baby in a stable. God's love and faithfulness would always endure as David and the rest of God's people continued to seek and find God's own heart.