



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION STARTERS

LIFE



LIFE IN HIGH DEF

IN HD

INTRODUCTION

Do you remember the first time you saw an HD (“high-definition”) TV set? Many of us may recall being a bit mesmerized because the clarity was nothing short of amazing. All of a sudden, the old TV sets didn’t seem nearly so satisfactory. Tens of millions of Americans now own an HD set. It’s difficult, if not impossible, to buy old-style analog TVs anymore.

This study is all about spiritual HD . . . that is, gaining the ability to see the spiritual life with much greater clarity and focus. It’s about looking deeper into life and how we live it out. It’s about looking into our own hearts and understanding what God wills for our lives.

We’ll do this through looking at the lives of two kings of Israel—David and Saul. A close look at their stories reveals they are very similar and, at the same time, very different men. Their stories are told largely in 1 and 2 Samuel and their life stories are given to us as an illustration of two different approaches to life, approaches we can clearly see in our own lives today; approaches that can be described as “soul” and “spirit.”

LIFE **IN** HD

Discussion Starter — week #1

Starter Questions

1. Have you ever looked at something interesting through a microscope?
2. What was it?
3. What made it memorable?

DISCUSSION

Two Kings . . . and Their Similarities

Saul and David were the first two kings of Israel. Those familiar with their stories in the Bible clearly recognize the differences between the two. However, they had a great deal in common as well. A study of Scripture reveals the following:

- ✦ They both were royalty.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 10:24 . . . David: 2 Samuel 2:4)
- ✦ They both prayed.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 14:37 . . . David: 2 Samuel 7:18-29)
- ✦ They both were given a new nature.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 9:9 . . . David: 1 Samuel 16:7)
- ✦ They both were close to highly regarded prophets.
(Samuel for Saul and both Samuel and Nathan for David)
- ✦ They both had significant victories.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 11:11/15:47-48 . . . David: 1 Samuel 17)
- ✦ They both faced crisis.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 13:19 . . . David: 1 Samuel 18)
- ✦ They both were anointed in the Holy Spirit.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 10:1, 6-7 . . . David: 1 Samuel 16:13)
- ✦ They both had a destiny in God.
(Saul: 1 Samuel 9:15-17 . . . David: 2 Samuel 7:16)

Take a look at the following and describe what else the two kings had in common:

1. 1 Samuel 9:17 and 1 Samuel 15:28 _____

2. 1 Samuel 14:33-35 and 2 Samuel 6:16 _____

3. 1 Samuel 15:17-19 and 2 Samuel 11:2-5 _____

Are you a little surprised as to how much in common they had?

YES

NO

DISCUSSION

What's the Difference?

What do you know about how the story ended for both Saul and David? If you are familiar with them, briefly describe the end of both men's stories to your group. If you are not familiar with their stories, check out these two passages and then discuss the differences.

1 Samuel 15:26-29 and 2 Samuel 7:14-16

1. Here's the critical question: For two guys with so much common (and so much in common spiritually, in that they both believed, prayed, worshiped, etc.), how is it that their lives ended up taking two such different paths? Discuss why you think their reign as kings and their lives ended so differently.
2. Have you ever heard the terms "soul and spirit" used together before? If you have, how would you describe differences between the "soul" and the "spirit?" If you haven't, consider that one of the key meanings of the Greek word for "soul" describes it as "the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, and aversions that an individual has." The soul or "soulish" behavior is often attributed to the "natural man" and describes actions or thoughts that can be described as "worldly." The Greek word for "spirit," on the other hand, describes actions or thoughts that are honorable and pleasing, devoid of all that is vulgar or coarse. The spirit, as described here, is unworldly and is instead focused on those things that may seem foolish to the natural man.
3. What do you think soul living would look like? What would spirit living look like? How do they differ?

LIVING IT OUT

Soul vs. Spirit Checklist

It is one thing to recognize the struggles and the need to grow in the lives of others. It may even be easy to recognize the struggles and successes of individuals found in the Bible, but ultimately it is important to be able to recognize and embrace the strengths and need for growth in our own lives. With that being the case, take a look at the following statements. How would you answer these on a "typical" day?

- I am impulsive.....* YES NO
- I jump to conclusions.....* YES NO
- I have overcome past hurts to the point where they generally do not define how I react to current circumstances.....* YES NO
- When I am wrong, I admit it without hesitation and without qualification.....* YES NO
- When I see sin in my life, I actively seek to overcome it and walk in repentance...* YES NO
- When I am inconvenienced, I remember that God is in control of my life, and I respond with grace.....* YES NO
- I usually stop and ask God what His will is before I make major decisions.....* YES NO
- When I examine my thoughts, I see that they are consistent with God's Will.....* YES NO
- When I think about those who oppose me, **I find myself blessing** them and not cursing them.....* YES NO
- I tend to live by faith and not fear.....* YES NO
- I struggle with patience and find it hard to wait for things I hope for.....* YES NO
- I am content with what God has given me and don't dwell on the things I don't have.....* YES NO
- I look at trials as opportunities to mature and grow in my faith.....* YES NO

Take a look at your answers to the questions on page 3 and be prepared to discuss the following:

In what areas are you strong?

In what areas are you stronger now than you have been in the past?

How have you grown in those areas?

In what areas do you *KNOW* you need to grow?

CONCLUSION

and Looking Forward

Hopefully, it's clear that a much closer examination of the lives of Saul and David is going to be necessary. That is, in order to better understand our lives, we'll need to kick into "spiritual HD" to have the clarity to discern what very different things were going on in the lives of these two kings.

The critical verse throughout this series will be 1 Thessalonians 5:23 . . .

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

Notice that there are three parts to every person . . . spirit, soul, and body. In the coming weeks, we're going to examine "soul and spirit" in order to be able to discern life in general and our own lives in particular. In short, Saul lived by soul and David lived by spirit. Saul lived by the natural, David by the supernatural. Saul lived connected to self-preservation, and David lived connected to doing God's will above his own.

Here's the critical "Life in HD" issue . . . we must learn to submit our soul to our spirit; submit our natural desires and patterns of behavior to those that are pleasing to God and ultimately more fulfilling for ourselves. That is, we need to learn to really make God's will first in our lives, rather than our own wills. We need to pay closer attention to what we are really doing, and not just accept that we are on the right path because of the religious "talk" that might easily come from own lips.

Take some time to talk about any specific "soul vs. spirit" or "self vs. God" battles you believe may be happening in your own life. Then take time to share any prayer requests you might have and pray for one another.

