



1 Samuel 16-18

- We all have/had a _____.

1 Samuel 19-21

- When we give up on God, we often fall into _____.
- The greatest illusion of all is the illusion of _____.
- The only real control we have is how we _____ to disappointments and obstacles.

3 Possible Responses:

1. Let it _____.
2. Keep _____.
3. _____ control.

1 Samuel 24

- What would you do in your circumstance if you were absolutely confident that _____?

Recommended Resources:

Plan B, by Pete Wilson
Emotionally Healthy Spiritually, by Peter Scazzero



DISCUSSION GUIDE
Plan B: Week One

Opening Prayer: God, we thank you for the gift of surrender. Help us to remember that we are not in control and that surrendering to you brings us more peace and freedom.

Read: Deuteronomy 3:16 and Proverbs 19:21 (The Message)

Talk It Over: This weekend we talked about what happens when things don't go the way we want them to. We often work so hard to plan every detail of our lives; we like to come up with multiple plans (plan b, c, d) in order to hold some level of control. While we may think this way of life is empowering or brings safety, it just leads us to a rigid way of living and moves us away from freedom. In the story of David shared this weekend, David visited the priest while escaping the threat of Saul and received the sword he had used in the battle with Goliath. David saw that sword as a sign from God. This sign helped him to remember that God was in control and had not left him.

- Have you ever felt like God has sent you a sign? Share that story if you are comfortable.
- Think of a time in the past where you have failed to see God in a situation, and instead fought hard to control it. What actions do you find yourself repeating in life in order to try and keep control?

Read: Read the following quote from *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero

"In our culture, addiction has become the most common way to deal with pain. We watch television incessantly. We keep busy running from one activity to another. We work seventy hours a week, indulge in pornography, over eat, drink, take pills – anything to help us avoid the pain. Some of us demand that someone or something (a marriage, sexual partner, an ideal family, children, an achievement, a career, or a church) take the loneliness away. Sadly, the result of denying and minimizing our wounds over many years is that we become less and less human, empty Christian shells with painted smiley faces. For some, a dull, low-level depression descends upon us, making us nearly unresponsive to all reality."

When our plans fall apart we are faced with 3 possible responses:

1. Let the situation control you
2. Keep trying harder and checking boxes
3. Surrender control

Surrender is the antidote to control, but it does not come easy in our distracted, numbing culture. Living a surrendered life requires practice. Choosing surrender can actually make life more difficult for a season. It is not a quick fix; it is most likely not our knee jerk reaction and takes some discipline to practice. You can describe surrender as a spiritual practice that you can do over and over again to lead you away from controlling ways, and into freedom and true healing.

- When things don't work out according to your plan, how do you react? Can you see a way to pause in these moments and reflect on how you want to respond?

- Think about control and surrender. Can you name some differences you notice in life when you practice one over the other? If you can, consider writing with write these differences down.
- Looking at those lists, where do you see more of God and less of you?

Contemplation: Take a few minutes to silence yourself before God. Bring to mind the most current issue, pain, or struggle where your plans do not appear to be working out the way you had hoped. Once you have that in your mind reflect on the following question: What would you do in your circumstance if you were absolutely confident that God was with you?

Closing Prayer: We come before you today, God, and we ask you to help us surrender our hearts and plans. Teach us how to become less rigid, demanding, and controlling; lead us into more freedom, flexibility, and surrender. Help us to be brave knowing you are with us even in the mess.

Challenge: Read the story of David (found in 1 Samuel 16-18) this week on your own. Look for ways that David tried to control or was able to surrender in the midst of the mess and how God stayed with him during it all.