"Good Intentions vs. God's Intentions"
2 Samuel 7:1-17

Good intentions aren't always God's intentions for our work in His Kingdom (7:1-5)

God's blessing was on King David. As the second King of Israel, David had been anointed King of Israel while King Saul was still on the throne. David had waited patiently on the Lord to give him the throne, and in God's way and in God's time, David eventually took the throne of Israel. As King of Israel, God gave David grace in the eyes of his enemies. The King of Tyre had built David a palace to live in, and God had even allowed David to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to the City of David! In the blessing of peace and prosperity in the Kingdom, David saw his house in comparison to the tent that the Ark of Covenant rested in, and David came up with a good intention. Basically, David felt like he should do something for the Lord. It wasn't right that he had a palace of fine wood while God had a tent of cloth! David intended to build a house for God, and on the surface, this sounded good. In fact, Nathan didn't even pray about it. David's plans for God's house sounded good to him as well, so he gave David his blessing to move ahead with his good intentions. But then God stepped in. Since David and Nathan failed to seek Him, in His grace He sought them. The Lord spoke to Nathan that night, and God started with one simple question: "Are you (David) to build a house for Me (God) to live in?" With that one question, God made it clear that David's good intentions weren't exactly on track with God's intentions for David's work in His Kingdom.

1. What was the fatal mistake that David and Nathan made when it came to David's good intentions related to a house for God? (Hint: What did they not do?) Why was this mistake significant?
2. Can your group come up with at least three excuses for why we often fail to pray about our good intentions for God's work? What are some specific things that we can do to avoid these excuses in our lives?
3. Go back and read 1 Samuel 15:17-24. King Saul, who served as King of Israel before David, had good intentions that weren't God's intentions for part of his work in God's Kingdom. From verse 24, what was the motive behind Saul's good intentions in offering some of the animals as sacrifices to God? Is this motive ever an issue for you in the way that you obey (or don't obey) God's Word in your life?
4. Pray for each other that we would always be people of prayer, seeking God's intentions for our lives, and that we would be God fearers more than man fearers in the decisions we make every day.

God's intentions are always revealed to us through His Word (7:6-7)

God went on to give Nathan the rest of His message for David. Following up on His question, God reminded David that from the time of the Exodus until that day, God had dwelt with His people in a tent. It had been what he had purposed and designed for Himself when He commanded Moses to build the Tabernacle! The tent of curtains wasn't Moses' idea, but it was God's idea. In addition to all of this, God had a rhetorical question for David, which was the most important question for the lesson for David and Nathan that day. The question was simply whether or not God had asked anyone for a house of wood? The obvious answer was "No!" In other words, God was telling David and Nathan that it was His choice and His decision on when and who would build Him a house to dwell in. The Lord was reminding David and Nathan that He was the one who made the call on how His people would know and worship Him. God was reminding them -- and us today -- that He is the God who always makes His intentions known through His Word to His people.

1. In 1 Samuel 15:17-24, Saul's good intentions were not so good because God had already given Saul His intentions through His Words to the prophet Samuel. In 2 Samuel 7, David's good intentions were not so
good once God gave David His intentions through the prophet Nathan. How does God reveal His intentions to us today?

2. Read Hebrews 1:1. What does this verse tell us about the role of the prophet? How does this verse answer the question of how God reveals His intentions to us today? What are the implications for us today?

3. In 1 Samuel 15:17-24, the problem wasn't that God hadn't revealed His intentions to Saul, the problem was that Saul didn't follow God's plan. Are there any intentions that God's Word has for your life that you have a hard time accepting and following?

God's intentions for us are much better than our good intentions (7:8-11)

David's intentions were good. The house for the Ark of the Covenant wasn't a bad idea, but it wasn't God's idea for David's work in His Kingdom. But God is so good.... While David's intentions were good, God's intentions for David were even better! God begins by reminding David of all that He's done for Him and for His people. It was God who selected David when he was only a shepherd boy. It was God who had been with David everywhere that he had gone in his life. It was God who had delivered David from his enemies, and it was God who was promising David that he would make his name great! David was wanting to do something for God, but God was reminding David that He's the one who does for His people. In fact, while David wanted to build God a house, God's intentions was to build David a house. What an incredible revelation from God! In essence, God was reminding David that He doesn't need David to do anything for Him except to allow God to do what He's planned and purposed for David! God's intentions for David were so much better than David's intentions for God.

1. David wanted to build God a house, but God's plans were to build David's house! Have you ever had a moment like this, where God's intentions for you ended up being so much better than your intentions? If so, take time to share and to praise the Lord for His intentions for us.

2. The phenomenal truth is that God has good intentions for His children's lives! In your group, share the names and stories of people that you know who need to know that God has intentions for them that are better than any of their good intentions.

3. Take time to pray for these individuals, and then to decide on a way that your group can hold each other accountable this week for going and telling these people that God has good intentions for His people (text updates to group during the week, report back next Sunday, etc.).

God's intentions are promises about an eternal relationship and Kingdom for His people (7:12-17)

The question was, however, what did God mean in saying that He was going to build David a house? David already had a "house," which was why all of this began in the first place. Was God going to build David another physical house to live in? No, God's purpose was much bigger than that. God was going to build David a household. Through David's descendant, God would build a house for the Ark of the Covenant. Through David's descendant's God would establish His eternal Kingdom. Through David's descendant's God would demonstrate His faithful love and relationship with His people. God's intentions weren't about a temporary, earthly home. God's intentions were about an eternal Kingdom and an eternal relationship with His people through a descendant of David that would be King! God's intentions were instructions for all of mankind (2 Samuel 7:19) announcing and laying the groundwork for the Messiah: Jesus Christ! Best of all, because God is God, God's intentions were more than just good intentions. God's intentions are promises that we can count on!

1. Read through this passage again, and put yourself in David's position. At first, when God questioned and rejected David's desire to build a house for the Lord, David must have felt some sense of dejection. God came back quickly, however, with His intentions for David that turned out to not only include a house for the Lord but also an eternal promise for David's throne! Are there any intentions that you have that God seems to be saying "no" to right now in your life?

2. Read Jeremiah 29:11 and Romans 8:28. What do these verses remind us of that we see early on in this passage in 2 Samuel? This week, as a group, challenge each other to memorize these verses, making them a part of your daily prayer time in thanking God for these truths and in praying for these truths to be seen and celebrated in our lives.

3. The real issue was David's temporary focus compared to God's eternal focus. God was and is focused on His eternal plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Are there any temporary things that have your focus drawn away from Jesus? Share and then pray that God would help us stay focused on His eternal intentions for His people!