

The People in David's Life and in Yours

An Adult Bible Study

by

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Lesson 1

Samuel—David's Mentor

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 30:1-12.

(Note: The responsive readings are all taken from psalms that contain a “heading” explaining when or why David wrote the psalm. This will illustrate what David was thinking at various times of his life and the lessons God was teaching him through the people he brought into his life.)

*Heading: A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.
(The account is found in 1 Kings chapter 8.)*

Leader: I will exalt you, O LORD,

Group: for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

L: O LORD my God, I called to you for help

G: and you healed me.

L: O LORD, you brought me up from the grave;

G: you spared me from going down into the pit.

L: Sing to the LORD, you saints of his;

G: praise his holy name.

L: For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime;

G: weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

L: When I felt secure,

G: I said, “I will never be shaken.”

L: O LORD, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm;

G: but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

L: To you, O LORD, I called;

G: to the Lord I cried for mercy:

L: “What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit?

G: Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?

L: Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me;

G: O LORD, be my help.”

L: You turned my wailing into dancing;

G: you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

L: that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.
G: **O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.**

Introduction

King David is one of the most well-known figures in the Old Testament. David and Goliath and David and Bathsheba are stories many know from their youth. This Bible study will cover the life of King David with a focus on the people the Lord brought into David's life. Each of these people played a role in how God shaped David's spiritual life so he could serve as Israel's king, a prophet who wrote many psalms, and a priest who led the people in their worship life.

As such, David became a picture of Jesus and David's kingdom became a picture of the kingdom of God. The struggles David went through, his continual reliance on his heavenly Father, and the joys he experienced when God delivered him all picture Jesus' struggles and joys.

As we watch how the Lord used the people in David's life, we are encouraged to think about the people Jesus has brought into our lives and how he has blessed us through them. We are also led to consider the roles we play in the lives of those around us, especially our fellow believers.

The first person the Lord brought into David's life, as we are considering them, was the prophet Samuel. There was no better person to provide David with the foundation he needed to do God's work.

Bible study

Samuel was the last of the judges, or informal leaders, God used to help his people, the Israelites. While still a little boy, he was brought by his mother to the tabernacle to help the high priest Eli. Samuel grew to be a great prophet and even led Israel in some of its battles against the Philistines. In time, the Israelites grew tired of not having a designated king like the other nations. They asked for a king, and God gave them one. Their first king was Saul. Saul was a powerful man who started out well but then forsook the Lord. God told Samuel to anoint another king to replace Saul.

Read 1 Samuel 16:6-13.

1. What did Samuel learn about David even before he met him? (verse 7)
2. The Lord had sent Samuel to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, to anoint one of his sons as king. How many of Jesse's sons did Samuel have to see before God showed him the right one?
3. What did the Lord do to David after Samuel anointed him?

Read 1 Samuel 19:18-24.

4. David went into Saul's court as a musician. His job was to play his harp when an evil spirit came on Saul. After a while David became a great warrior and led Israel in its battles against the Philistines. Saul became jealous of David and tried to kill him. To whom did David flee?

5. How did the Lord stop Saul from killing David?

6. What might David and Samuel have talked about during the time David was with Samuel? Read the following passages. Glean insights into Samuel from these passages, and use your insights to offer some ideas of what Samuel and David may have talked about.

1 Chronicles 29:27-30—"He [David] ruled over Israel forty years—seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king. As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, together with the details of his reign and power, and the circumstances that surrounded him and Israel and the kingdoms of all the other lands."

7. What work did Samuel do in addition to leading Israel? If Samuel had already started his record of David's life, what impression would this have had on David?

1 Chronicles 6:33,34—"Here are the men who served, together with their sons: From the Kohathites: Heman, the musician, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah."

8. What ability did one of Samuel's descendants, Heman, possess? (Hint: See the heading of Psalm 88. Also see 1 Chronicles 16:41,42.) What does this suggest about Samuel? How might Samuel have helped David?

1 Chronicles 9:22—"Altogether, those chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds numbered 212. They were registered by genealogy in their villages. The gatekeepers had been assigned to their positions of trust by David and Samuel the seer."

9. The writer of Chronicles told his Levite readers about the importance of gatekeepers in the work of the temple. He pointed them back to work David and Samuel did in their day. How might this have factored into David's conversation with Samuel?

2 Chronicles 35:17-19—“The Israelites who were present celebrated the Passover at that time and observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah, with the priests, the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were there with the people of Jerusalem. This Passover was celebrated in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.”

10. How did Samuel help in the Israelites' worship service? How might this have come up in David and Samuel's conversations?

Jeremiah 15:1—“Then the LORD said to me: ‘Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go!’”

11. In the days of Jeremiah (who lived during the days when Judah was taken into captivity), the Lord was angry with his people, the Israelites. What role must Samuel have played in the life of God's people to be mentioned alongside Moses? How might this have helped David?

Hebrews 11:32-34—“What more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.”

12. David and Samuel are mentioned in the great chapter on heroes of faith (Hebrews chapter 11). Based on his experience, what encouragement might Samuel have given David?

Acts 3:22-25—“Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’ Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’”

13. What was the heart of Samuel's prophecies? How might this have shaped Samuel and David's conversation?
14. How was David's work as God's prophet, priest, and king blessed through Samuel?

The people God has put in your life

15. Do you have any Christian teachers God has brought into your life who have been a special blessing to you? What do you remember or appreciate about them the most? Reflect on how they have helped you in your life of faith. Don't just think about formal teachers you may have had in a classroom setting but informal teachers—Christians whom God brought into your life who taught you many things about life under God.

Summary

Samuel had many spiritual gifts. He was a truly great man who was a great blessing to God's people. Later on David shared many of Samuel's characteristics. No doubt Samuel taught David many things of a spiritual nature that were foundational to David's work as a prophet, a priest, and a king.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 1 Samuel 16:14–19:24.

Lesson 2

Goliath—The Person Who Made David Famous

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 52:1-9.

*Heading: For the director of music. A maskil of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."
(The account is found in 1 Samuel chapter 22.)*

Leader: Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man?

Group: Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?

L: Your tongue plots destruction;

G: it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit.

L: You love evil rather than good,

G: falsehood rather than speaking the truth.

L: You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!

G: Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin:

L: He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent;

G: he will uproot you from the land of the living.

L: The righteous will see and fear;

G: they will laugh at him, saying,

L: "Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold

G: but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!"

L: But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God;

G: I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever.

L: I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope,
for your name is good.

G: I will praise you in the presence of your saints.

Introduction

David was serving Saul by playing his harp to drive away the evil spirit God had sent to torment him. He was also spending time at home, taking care of his father's sheep. The event we will focus on in our lesson today takes place early in David's time of service to Saul.

Bible study

Read 1 Samuel 17:1-11.

1. Describe Goliath.
2. What challenge did Goliath issue to the Israelites?

Read 1 Samuel 17:30-39.

3. Why did David know he could defeat Goliath in battle?

Read 1 Samuel 17:40-51.

4. What was Goliath's greatest error? (verse 43)
5. When Goliath defied the armies of Israel, whom was he actually defying? (verse 45)
6. God's name, the LORD, refers to God's faithfulness. He is the One who promised to bless those who blessed Abraham and his descendants and to curse those who cursed them (see Genesis 12:1-3). In light of this, in what danger was Goliath putting himself?
7. God's promise of a Savior was bound up with the nation of Israel. Therefore, when Goliath challenged Israel's God, the LORD, what was he threatening to do to God's promise of a Savior?
8. Note what a detailed picture David gave of how the confrontation would end. What does this show? (verse 46)
9. David was confident that he would defeat Goliath. What would happen throughout the world when it became known that the mighty Goliath had been defeated by a shepherd boy with a slingshot?
10. In everything he said, David glorified the Lord. How did he do this in verse 47?

Read 1 Samuel 18:6-9.

11. David's killing Goliath made David well known among the Israelites. The last thing David could have cared about was his own fame. But the Lord used this event for two purposes. What were they?

The people God has put in your life

12. Has the Lord ever called on you to take a stand against someone who challenged him? Did that bring glory to God? Share this with the class. Don't think this has to be on as grand a level as it was in David's case. Perhaps only a few people knew about what you did.

Summary

The Lord brought the most powerful soldier of Philistia into David's life. Goliath afforded David an opportunity to defend the power and honor of the Lord. He gave David an opportunity to show his love to the Lord and his appreciation of the promises God had given the world through the nation of Israel. God used David's victory to arouse the jealousy of Saul and to make the Israelites realize that David was to be the next king of Israel.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 1 Samuel 20–24.

Lesson 3

Saul—God's Tool of Affliction

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 57:1-11.

Heading: For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam. When he had fled from Saul into the cave. (The account is found in 1 Samuel chapter 24 or 26.)

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge.

Group: I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

L: I cry out to God Most High,

G: to God, who fulfills his purpose for me.

L: He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me;

G: God sends his love and his faithfulness.

L: I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts—

G: men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.

L: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

G: let your glory be over all the earth.

L: They spread a net for my feet—I was bowed down in distress.

G: They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves.

L: My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;

G: I will sing and make music.

L: Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre!

G: I will awaken the dawn.

L: I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations;

G: I will sing of you among the peoples.

L: For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;

G: your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

L: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

G: let your glory be over all the earth.

Introduction

Great people of faith do not emerge that way from their mothers' wombs. They are forged by God on the anvil of affliction. Even David, to whom God had given a rich measure of the Holy Spirit, needed the Lord to purify him. He had a sinful nature and needed the Lord's help to suppress it.

Goliath had been an unbeliever, an enemy whom God used for a unique, onetime purpose. Saul, on the other hand, was the hard anvil on which the Lord placed David for some 13 years after he had anointed David to be the next king. In a negative way, Saul was one of the most important people in David's life.

The account of how God used Saul takes us to the end of 1 Samuel. The last chapter of 1 Samuel, chapter 31, records Saul's death. We will only treat two of the many accounts of David's struggle with Saul.

Some other accounts are found in 1 Samuel 18:20-30; 19:8-17; and chapter 26. Read these as time allows.

Bible study

Read 1 Samuel 18:10-17.

1. Saul tried to kill David. After he failed to kill David himself, he tried a different approach. What was that?

2. How did the Lord use Saul's plan to help David?

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-13.

3. How did the Lord use this occasion to test David? (Hint: Think about who Saul was.)

4. How did the Lord use this occasion to train David to lead Israel? (Hint: Think about the advice his men gave him.)

5. Consider all the forces with which David had to deal. Can you list them?

Read 1 Samuel 24:14-21.

6. How did the Lord use this occasion to vindicate David and reaffirm his promises to him? (Hint: Think about the final words spoken by Saul.)

7. Who do you think suffered more, Saul or David?

8. Everything God put David through led David to pray. David wrote down many of his prayers. Look again at the psalm in the Worship section of this lesson. Now that you are more familiar with the setting of this psalm, explain why David made the following statements.

Psalms 57:1—“I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.”

Psalms 57:2—“. . . to God, who fulfills his purpose for me.”

Psalms 57:4—“I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.”

Psalms 57:7—“My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music.”

Psalms 57:10—“For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”

The people God has put in your life

9. Do you have someone who has played the role of Saul in your life? Discuss how the Lord has blessed your life as a Christian through such a person. (Don't discuss the details unless it is appropriate.)

10. Even though God uses such people to help us grow in our faith, what should we always pray that God will do for such people?

Summary

God brought Saul into David's life to discipline him. Throughout his years of suffering at Saul's hands, David learned many things. Above all, he learned to pray. He had occasions to write the psalms that we use in our prayer life. He learned to trust in God. He was given the opportunity to show respect for God's anointed king, even when that king did nothing to deserve his respect. He learned to deal with fellow Israelites who were not as spiritually mature as he was. He learned to wait patiently for God to act on his behalf.

Can you think of any other ways the Lord used Saul to bless David?

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 1 Samuel 25–29.

Lesson 4

Jonathan—David's True Friend in Christ

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 34:1-22. (When David escaped from Abimelech.)

Heading: Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left. (This event is found in 1 Samuel chapter 21.)

Leader: I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

Group: My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

L: Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.

G: I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

L: Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

G: This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

L: The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

G: Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

L: Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.

G: The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

L: Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

G: Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,

L: keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.

G: Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

L: The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

G: the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

L: The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

G: The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

L: A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;

G: he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

L: Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

G: The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

Introduction

In the last two lessons we focused on two of David's enemies. The Lord never allows us to undergo more than we can bear. One of the greatest ways he enables us to bear up in times of discipline is by giving us Christian friends.

The Lord gave David one of the finest friends a person could have. In the fullest sense of the phrase, David and Jonathan became true soul mates.

Bible study

Read 1 Samuel 13:23–14:1; 14:4–15.

This account will help us better understand David and Jonathan's friendship. It will help us see what drew the two of them together.

1. What was Jonathan's attitude toward the Philistines? (verse 6) Was his attitude God-pleasing?
2. Compare Jonathan's statement at the end of verse 6 with David's statement to Goliath right before he killed him.
3. Compare the outcome of Jonathan's act of faith in this account with David's act of faith in killing Goliath.

Read 1 Samuel 18:1–4.

4. Explain the bond David and Jonathan enjoyed.

Read 1 Samuel 19:1–7.

5. How did Jonathan show David true Christian friendship?

Read 1 Samuel 20:1-9.

6. This event was near the end of the days when David could safely stay in Saul's court. How did Jonathan again agree to show David friendship?

Read 1 Samuel 20:28-34.

7. What did Jonathan have to suffer for being David's friend?

Read 1 Samuel 20:35-42.

8. How did Jonathan show his love for the Lord in how he treated David?

Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18.

9. For all we know, this was the last time David and Jonathan were together. At this time David was in the desert of Judea fleeing from Saul. Why did Jonathan visit him there?
10. Why didn't Jonathan stay with his friend David? After all, he believed God was going to establish David as king to replace his father, Saul. He could have been a great help to David.

Read 2 Samuel 1:23-27.

11. These were David's last words for his friend Jonathan. What honor did David show Saul? (verses 23,24) What higher honor did David show Jonathan? (verses 25-27)

The people God has put in your life

12. Reflect on a Christian friend God has put in your life. Share an example of one time a Christian friend supported you in a time of need or helped in your life of faith.

Summary

The Lord took many blessings away from David during his years with Saul—his earthly peace of mind, any semblance of a family life, the joy of being able to worship at God's house—and sent him many hardships in the desert as he fled.

Yet God supported David by giving him a friend in Christ. This friend helped keep David focused on the Lord and on the Lord's promises to him.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 1 Samuel 30–2 Samuel 2.

Lesson 5

Abigail—The Friend Who Saved David From Himself

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 63:1-11.

Heading: A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah. (The account is found in 1 Samuel chapters 22–27.)

Leader: O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you;

Group: my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

L: I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

G: Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

L: I will praise you as long as I live,

G: and in your name I will lift up my hands.

L: My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;

G: with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

L: On my bed I remember you;

G: I think of you through the watches of the night.

L: Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

G: My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

L: They who seek my life will be destroyed;

G: they will go down to the depths of the earth.

L: They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.

G: But the king will rejoice in God;

L: all who swear by God's name will praise him,

G: while the mouths of liars will be silenced.

Introduction

David repeatedly showed patience in undergoing God's discipline. He accepted the hardships he had to endure. He saved Saul's life even though he could have ended it. He put up with the spiritual immaturity of his men and of the people who lived in the desert where he had fled from Saul.

But on one occasion David lost his temper and was bent on revenge. The Lord sent him a friend in this time of need.

Bible study

Read 1 Samuel 25:1-9.

1. Consider the difficulties David faced in the wilderness. Consider also the fact that he had to find food for his six hundred men. He was living near a rich man, Nabal, who had many flocks and herds. What might David and his men have been tempted to do? What did they do instead?

Read 1 Samuel 25:10-13.

2. Sometimes a rich landowner like Nabal would reward people like David and his men for protecting his possessions. Evaluate Nabal's response to David's request.

Read 1 Samuel 25:14-24.

3. Evaluate what David decided to do.
4. Evaluate Abigail's decision.

Read 1 Samuel 25:25-31.

5. We cannot help but marvel at the wisdom of Abigail's words to David. After taking a good portion of the blame on herself (verse 24), she stated the reason for meeting David. Evaluate her words.

(Verse 26) Although Abigail fell on her face before David, she did not beg David to spare her household. Rather, she . . .

Abigail prayed that all of David's enemies be given over to foolishness. This shows she understood her husband's foolish behavior to be a judgment of God on Nabal. . . .

(Verse 27) After presenting David with a gift of food, she expressed confidence that . . .

(Verse 28) Abigail was clearly not as concerned with herself as she was with . . .

(Verse 29) Abigail confessed her faith that in the future . . .

(Verses 30,31a) Abigail had saved David from . . .

(Verse 31b) She only asked for herself that David . . .

Abigail did not just save her own household. She actually saved . . .

Read 1 Samuel 25:32-34 (and 35-39a if there is time).

6. Describe David's relief when he realized what the Lord had done for him through Abigail.

Read 1 Samuel 25:39b-42.

7. Why was it an act of faith for Abigail to marry David?

The people God has put in your life

8. Has the Lord ever used a fellow Christian to keep you from doing something stupid or harmful to your faith or your earthly life? Share with the class how the Lord blessed you through that person.

Summary

David had shown nothing but patience throughout his life. He had dealt patiently with Saul. But on this occasion David lost his temper. He was about to commit a sinful act of vengeance, something that would have reflected badly on himself, on his men, and on the Lord. It would have been harmful, perhaps even fatal, for his future kingship and his relationship with God's people.

In mercy, the Lord sent David a wise woman, Abigail, who kept him from sin and enabled God's plan for David and for the people of Israel to remain on track.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 2 Samuel 3–7.

Lesson 6

Uriah—The Friend David Murdered

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 51:1-9.

Heading: For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. (The event is found in 2 Samuel chapter 12.)

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

Group: according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

L: Wash away all my iniquity

G: and cleanse me from my sin.

L: For I know my transgressions,

G: and my sin is always before me.

L: Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,

G: so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

L: Surely I was sinful at birth,

G: sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

L: Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;

G: you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

L: Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;

G: wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

L: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

G: Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Introduction

David was overcome with lust. He slept with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. This was tragic enough, but even more tragic was how he dealt with this foreigner who had come to faith in the God of Israel—a man whose loyalty to David and the Lord went far beyond that of most.

Bible study

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5.

1. What sin did David commit?

Read 2 Samuel 11:6-13.

2. Use verse 6 from this section and 2 Samuel 23:39 to get a profile of Uriah.

3. Evaluate David's actions through the following questions.

For what reason did it seem that David had brought Uriah home?

What was the real reason he brought Uriah home?

Why did David wine and dine Uriah?

Why did David detain Uriah in Jerusalem for several days?

Why did David give Uriah gifts?

Why did David get Uriah drunk?

4. Evaluate Uriah's actions through the following questions.

Why didn't he go home while he was in Jerusalem?

Why was Uriah content to sleep with David's servants?

How must David have felt in Uriah's presence?

Read 2 Samuel 11:14-27.

5. What did David finally do to cover up his sins?

6. David added sin to sin. Find as many as you can.

7. What kind of friend could Uriah have been for David? (Bring into your thoughts the fact that Uriah was a Hittite.)

8. What kind of friend was he for David?

The people God has put in your life

9. Uriah was a special person whom the Lord brought into David's life. Uriah's spiritual nature was the tool God used to keep David from his sin of unrepentance. He actually made David a greater sinner than he had been before. Uriah paid for his spiritual strength with his life.

This might be more difficult to apply to our lives. Has the Lord ever brought into your life a person whose spiritual strength forced you to give up an unrepentant attitude or made it impossible for you to take a compromising position on some idea or action? Or has God ever sent a person into your life to force you to do the right thing? Did you recognize that person's spiritual maturity or did you make the person suffer for it?

10. Think of the role you play in other people's lives. Might you, unaware of the fact, have played an important spiritual role in the life of another person?

Summary

This lesson is not about a person whom David could count as a personal friend or enemy. Yet the Lord brought Uriah into his life to keep David from being able to cover up his sin. If Uriah had not been the kind of person he was, David could easily have made it seem that Uriah was the father of Bathsheba's child.

But God brought a man like Uriah into David's life to compound David's sin and force it out into the open. This gave the prophet Nathan a chance to confront David and lead him to repentance. Without Uriah in David's life, it is possible he never would have confessed his sin, written psalms expressing his repentance, and continued to serve as a type of Christ—the great prophet, priest, and king. Without Uriah, God's kingdom would have suffered greatly.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 2 Samuel 8–13.

Lesson 7

Nathan—David's Pastor

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 51:10-19.

Heading: For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. (The event is found in 2 Samuel chapter 12.)

Leader: Create in me a pure heart, O God,
Group: and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

L: Do not cast me from your presence
G: or take your Holy Spirit from me.

L: Restore to me the joy of your salvation
G: and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

L: Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
G: and sinners will turn back to you.

L: Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me,
G: and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

L: O Lord, open my lips,
G: and my mouth will declare your praise.

L: You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
G: you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

L: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
G: a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

L: In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;
G: build up the walls of Jerusalem.

L: Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you;
G: then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Introduction

King David needed a pastor, just as everyone else needs one. After Samuel died, the Lord provided a spiritual leader for David, the prophet Nathan.

Nathan figures prominently in three accounts in Scripture. We will cover the first two accounts in this lesson. The third is located in 1 Kings chapter 2, at the end of David's life. David's logical heir made a bid for the throne, but Nathan, at Bathsheba's urging, helped ensure that Solomon was placed on David's throne as God had promised.

Bible study

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-7.

1. What did David want to do for the Lord? When Nathan heard about David's plan, what did he tell David to do?
2. What did the Lord tell Nathan that night?

Read 2 Samuel 7:8-17.

3. Complete this sentence: "David said to the Lord, 'I want to build a house for you.' But the Lord said to David, 'No, but I will . . .'"
4. There is a fair amount of mystery within God's prophecy to David through the prophet Nathan. Yet the basics of the prophecy are not difficult to figure out. This prophecy contains a short-term and a long-term fulfillment.
What is the short-term fulfillment of this prophecy?

What is the long-term fulfillment of this prophecy?

5. Explain: "Nathan had the privilege of proclaiming the gospel message to King David."

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-4.

6. Briefly review the story of Bathsheba and her husband Uriah.
7. How do you think Nathan felt when God sent him to confront David with the story of the sheep?

Read 2 Samuel 12:5-9.

8. Nathan did not mince any words. Reflect on the clarity and power with which he confronted David with his sin.

Read 2 Samuel 12:10-14.

9. When David confessed his sin, what did Nathan have the privilege of being able to tell David?
10. Nevertheless, the Lord chastened David. What would David have to suffer in the future? What hints do we find in Nathan's words that explain why God would chasten David?

The people God has put in your life

11. What do you think your pastor enjoys doing more, telling you about the gospel or confronting you with God's judgment on your sin?
12. How do you react when your pastor comes bearing words of judgment?

Summary

The Lord gave David a wonderful gift in Nathan. He was a true and faithful pastor. He carefully conveyed the gospel message to David, and he confronted David with his sin and how God would chasten him in the future. Only pastors like this will help us in faith and foster the growth of God's kingdom among us. Thank the Lord for pastors who faithfully feed you and the members of his kingdom with the law and the gospel.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 2 Samuel 14–16.

Lesson 8

Absalom—God's Tool for Chastening

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 3:1-8.

Heading: A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom. (The account is found in 2 Samuel chapter 15.)

Leader: O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!

Group: Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him."

L: But you are a shield around me, O LORD;

G: you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.

L: To the LORD I cry aloud,

G: and he answers me from his holy hill.

L: I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

G: I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side.

L: Arise, O LORD! Deliver me, O my God!

G: Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked.

L: From the LORD comes deliverance.

G: May your blessing be on your people.

Introduction

Nathan's words came true. After some time, a series of events took place that drove a wedge between David and his third son, Absalom. Specifically, David's firstborn, Amnon, raped Absalom's sister Tamar. We are told that David was furious when he heard about this but did nothing (2 Samuel 13:21). Might David's adultery with Bathsheba have made him feel ashamed to punish Amnon? In any case, Absalom took matters into his own hands and killed Amnon.

Absalom fled. David wanted to call him home but put off doing that. Finally, Joab got David to call Absalom back to Jerusalem. Absalom returned to Jerusalem, only to experience his father, David, giving him the cold shoulder. David refused to see Absalom face-to-face. Two years later, with Joab's help, David was reunited with Absalom. But the damage had been done. Absalom wickedly plotted to take the kingdom away from his father, David.

Bible study

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-13.

1. How did the Lord begin fulfilling what he had prophesied about David's household in 2 Samuel 12:10?
2. Recall why the Lord had said that the sword would never depart from David's household.

Read 2 Samuel 16:20-23.

3. Ahithophel was Absalom's counselor. What was the first thing he told Absalom to do after Absalom had taken Jerusalem? Was his advice wise or unwise? Was it moral or immoral?
4. How did this act serve God's purpose of chastening David?

Read 2 Samuel 18:1-17.

5. Many things happened between the time Absalom entered Jerusalem and the day of David's tragic defeat of Absalom's army. What happened that day to the armies of Israel? to Absalom?
6. How did the events that day serve God's purpose of chastening David?

Read 2 Samuel 18:24-33.

7. How did David take the news that Absalom was dead? Was he right or wrong to feel this way?
8. David wished that he had died instead of Absalom. What did he mean by that?
9. List the many ways God chastened David after his act of adultery.

10. How did this show the people of Israel and even Israel's enemies that the Lord did not condone what David had done with Bathsheba and with Uriah?

11. How did God's discipline serve David and the people of Israel?

The people God has put in your life

12. It is unlikely that anything close to this will happen to fellow Christians in your congregation. Some Christians do experience difficulties arising from within their own families. But in one important way David's experience is different from the difficulties that come into the lives of our families. Can you pinpoint what that way is? (Hint: See 2 Samuel 12:7-14.)

Summary

The Lord brought Absalom into David's life as his tool for discipline. Absalom's wickedness set up a series of events whereby David was chastened for his sins and those around David would realize that the Lord did not condone what David had done.

In the end, God's kingdom prospered and David was restored to his position as Israel's spiritual leader.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 2 Samuel 16–19.

Lesson 9

Friends for Hard Times

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 18:7-17.

Heading: For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: Verse 1: I love you, O LORD, my strength. (The event is found in 1 Samuel chapter 31.)

Leader: The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook;

Group: they trembled because he was angry.

L: Smoke rose from his nostrils;

G: consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it.

L: He parted the heavens and came down;

G: dark clouds were under his feet.

L: He mounted the cherubim and flew;

G: he soared on the wings of the wind.

L: He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—

G: the dark rain clouds of the sky.

L: Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning.

G: The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.

L: He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies,

G: great bolts of lightning and routed them.

L: The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD,

G: at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

L: He reached down from on high and took hold of me;

G: he drew me out of deep waters.

L: He rescued me from my powerful enemy,

G: from my foes, who were too strong for me.

Introduction

When the Lord sent oppression into David's life to prepare him for his future task of leading the people of Israel, he gave David comfort, companionship, and spiritual support through Jonathan.

When the Lord was using Absalom as his tool to chasten David, he gave David friends to support him at this difficult time and keep David from being killed. Our lesson today will focus on these friends.

Bible study

Absalom had entered Jerusalem and usurped David's throne. David and those loyal to him had fled the city and headed down to the Jordan River to enter more neutral territory. Before David left and during his flight, the Lord supplied the friends he needed. The Lord only wanted to chasten David, not destroy him.

Read 2 Samuel 15:13-22—Ittai the Gittite

1. What do we know about Ittai?

2. Why must Ittai have been such an encouragement to David?

Read 2 Samuel 15:23-29—Zadok and Abiathar; Ahimaaz and Jonathan

3. Who were these men? What help did David ask of them?

Read 2 Samuel 15:30-37—Hushai

4. What help did David ask of Hushai?

Read 2 Samuel 16:5-13—Shimei

5. Who was Shimei?

6. What did Shimei afford David the opportunity to do?

Read 2 Samuel 16:15–17:16—How the Lord used Hushai

7. How did the Lord use Hushai?

Read 2 Samuel 17:17-22—How the Lord used Ahimaaz and Jonathan

8. How did the Lord use Ahimaaz and Jonathan?

Read 2 Samuel 17:27-29—How the Lord used Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai

9. What help did these men give David?

Read 2 Samuel 18:1,2a—How the Lord used Ittai

10. How did the Lord use faithful Ittai?

11. Evaluate: “The Lord gave David friends with the precise gifts and resources to help David in his time of chastening.”

When David needed military help, God provided . . .

When David needed a line of communication, God provided . . .

When David needed Absalom to make unwise decisions, God provided . . .

When David needed to display the spirit in which he was taking his hardships, God provided . . .

When David needed supplies in his flight from Absalom, God provided . . .

The people God has put in your life

12. Reflect on a specific time God sent you someone to give you exactly what you needed. Or reflect on a time when God let you be his agent to supply a fellow Christian with what he or she needed.

Summary

During the difficult period when God was chastening David and making clear to all that he did not condone David's acts of adultery and murder, God provided David with special friends. He provided military leadership, Ittai the Gittite. He provided insiders in Jerusalem—Zadok and Abiathar and their sons Jonathan and Ahimaaz—to provide intelligence on what was happening in court and to set up a line of communication. He provided Hushai as a rival counselor in Jerusalem whose advice was the key to David staying alive during the first crucial hours of his escape. He provided Barzillai and two other men who supplied David and his men with food and cooking utensils.

In all this, the Lord showed himself faithful to his promise of continuing mercy to the house of David.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David's life: 2 Samuel 20–22.

Lesson 10

Joab—The Most Complex Person in David's Life (Part One)

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 60:1-12.

Heading: For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant." A miktam of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah, and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. (The events took place in 2 Samuel chapters 8 and 10.)

Leader: You have rejected us, O God, and burst forth upon us;

Group: you have been angry—now restore us!

L: You have shaken the land and torn it open;

G: mend its fractures, for it is quaking.

L: You have shown your people desperate times;

G: you have given us wine that makes us stagger.

L: But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner

G: to be unfurled against the bow.

L: Save us and help us with your right hand,

G: that those you love may be delivered.

L: God has spoken from his sanctuary:

G: "In triumph I will parcel out Shechem and measure off the Valley of Succoth.

L: Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;

G: Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter.

L: Moab is my washbasin, upon Edom I toss my sandal;

G: over Philistia I shout in triumph."

L: Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?

G: Is it not you, O God, you who have rejected us and no longer go out with our armies?

L: Give us aid against the enemy,

G: for the help of man is worthless.

L: With God we will gain the victory,

G: and he will trample down our enemies.

Introduction

Joab is the most complex person in David's life. We have saved him until last because it is more difficult to compare him with the people the Lord most commonly puts into our lives. Some questions about his motives and character may have to be left unanswered. If nothing else, Joab is a corrective to our over-analyzing the people in our lives. Sometimes you just have to rest in God's wisdom and providence, knowing that he is doing what is best for us and that he is using us for his purposes in the lives of those with whom he has placed us.

Nevertheless, Joab plays a major role in David's life. This lesson and the next are comprised of a series of short accounts where Joab's and David's lives intersected. As you read each account, ask yourself if you would give a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down verdict to what Joab did. At the end of these lessons, pause to reflect on how you may define the role Joab played.

Bible study

Joab and his two brothers, Asahel and Abishai, were cousins of David. No doubt David knew Joab and his brothers from their childhood years. Joab may have been with David when he was in the wilderness fleeing from Saul. We know Joab's brother Abishai was there (1 Samuel 26:6).

After Saul's death, not long after David became king in Hebron, we hear about a battle between David and Abner, Saul's general. Joab was leading David's troops, but it seems that he had not yet been formally designated as their commander. In that battle, Asahel, Joab's brother, had tried to kill Abner. Abner warned Asahel not to pursue him and finally had to kill Asahel in self-defense. If there is time, read 2 Samuel 2:17-23 to hear the account.

David was king in Judah for seven and a half years. During those years there was war between Judah and Israel. Finally, Abner, Saul's general and leader of the troops of Israel, recognized the futility of continuing the conflict and convinced Israel to come over to David. He went to Jerusalem and made peace with David.

Joab became the commander of David's troops after David became king over all of Israel, captured Jerusalem, and made it his capital. First Chronicles 11:5,6 gives the details: "Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David. David had said, 'Whoever leads the attack on the Jebusites will become commander-in-chief.' Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, and so he received the command."

Read 2 Samuel 3:17-26.

1. What reason did Joab give David for why David should not have made peace with Abner? What do you think was the real reason for Joab's attitude toward Abner?

2. After David showed the people he personally had nothing to do with Abner's death, he made this comment about Joab and his brothers: "Do you not realize that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel this day? And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!" (2 Samuel 3:38,39). What insights do David's words give us about his relationship with Joab?

Read 2 Samuel 10:7-14.

3. David had sent Joab to fight against the Ammonites and Arameans (Syrians). When Joab realized the difficult position the army was in, he encouraged his brother Abishai. How did Joab encourage him?

Read 2 Samuel 11:14-25.

4. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of Joab's fighting men. To cover up his sin, David wanted Uriah killed so it would seem that Bathsheba was pregnant with Uriah's child. How did Joab respond to David's order to make sure Uriah was killed in battle?

Read 2 Samuel 12:26-30a.

5. Joab was about ready to take Rabbah, an Ammonite city. What did he do when he was on the verge of complete victory?

Read 2 Samuel 14:1-24. (Unless there is time, read the beginning [14:1-3] and the end [14:18-24].)

6. Absalom, David's third son, fled Israel after he killed David's firstborn, Amnon, for raping his (Absalom's) sister Tamar. Some time had gone by; Joab realized David wanted to summon Absalom back to Jerusalem. Joab got David to call Absalom home. Evaluate what Joab did on this occasion.

Read 2 Samuel 18:10-16.

7. As we saw, the Lord used Absalom to chasten David. David commanded his army to be merciful to Absalom, but Joab disobeyed orders. What did Joab do to Absalom?

Read 2 Samuel 19:1-8.

8. Joab counsels David not to weep for Absalom. Why does he do this?

9. Note what Joab said when he rebuked David: “You love those who hate you and hate those who love you.” Was Joab right or was David right? What insight might this provide into the role Joab played in David’s life?

Summary

Joab is a complex character. He was cunning and cruel, but he also trusted in God and had deep insights into David’s faults. He was “too strong” for David to handle, yet his strength made him the only person who could tell David what he needed to hear.

Home study

Read the following chapters that tell the story of David’s life: 2 Samuel 23–
1 Kings 2:12.

Lesson 11

Joab—The Most Complex Person in David's Life (Part Two)

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 18:1-6; 46-50.

Heading: For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: Verse 1: I love you, O LORD, my strength. (The event is found in 1 Samuel chapter 31.)

Leader: The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

Group: my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

L: I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,

G: and I am saved from my enemies.

L: The cords of death entangled me;

G: the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

L: The cords of the grave coiled around me;

G: the snares of death confronted me.

L: In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help.

G: From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

L: The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!

G: Exalted be God my Savior!

L: He is the God who avenges me,

G: who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies.

L: You exalted me above my foes;

G: from violent men you rescued me.

L: Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD;

G: I will sing praises to your name.

L: He gives his king great victories;

G: he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.

Introduction

This lesson continues our evaluation of Joab.

Bible study

Read 2 Samuel 20:4-13.

1. After Absalom's defeat, a man named Sheba won over the armies of Israel and mounted a rebellion against David. Amasa continued to command Israel's forces. Was Joab just in what he did to Amasa?
2. What do you think would have happened if Joab had not killed Amasa?

Read 2 Samuel 24:1-4.

3. In pride, David decided to see just how powerful he really was. So instead of relying on God as he had always done, he sent Joab to count his army. How did Joab respond to David's command?

Read 1 Kings 1:5-7.

4. At the end of David's life, Joab showed his sinful side. What act of unfaithfulness toward David did he commit?
5. The writer of 1 Kings comments on how David treated Adonijah as he grew up. How was David accustomed to dealing with Adonijah? How might this characteristic have played into Joab's earlier relationship with David?

Read 1 Kings 2:5,6; 28-34.

6. Was David just in commanding Solomon to punish Joab?
7. How did Solomon evaluate Joab's actions? (verses 31-33)

Summary

Both David and Joab erred. David wanted to show mercy to those who had been his enemies. But sometimes his merciful nature caused him to overlook things he should have done for the good of the kingdom. Joab realized this and compensated for it. But he compensated in a conniving and cruel way and did it behind the back of his appointed king. For various reasons, David was not able to rid his court of Joab's bad influence, even though he saw it early on. Those reasons included Joab's loyalty, his faith in the Lord, and his wise counsel. David had to leave it to Solomon to bring Joab to justice.

In the end, David left everything in God's hands. He prayed to the Lord and trusted him to foster the good of his kingdom in his own time and manner. Without excusing Joab's sins and recognizing the fact that God could have dealt with David's former enemies in a better way, we might consider Joab one of the ways God answered David's prayer.

The people God has put in your life

Sometimes it is hard to evaluate the role we play in another person's life or the role he or she plays in ours.

We should be aware that the Lord sometimes brings one person into another person's life to compensate for his or her weakness. And if we personally see ourselves having to compensate for another person's weaknesses, we should always strive to do so in a God-pleasing way.