



YEAR 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 4: God Leads His People

Lesson 3: The Story of King David—2 Samuel 5-8

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

(A theological and biblical reflection on today's Scripture passage.)

GOD'S STORY

David's intentional relationship with God began even before he was anointed as a boy by the prophet Samuel to be the future king of Israel. The time he spent out in the fields as a shepherd protecting his sheep prepared him to fight and conquer Goliath as well as to know what it meant to watch over a kingdom. Before he proved himself in battle or as a leader, David first proved he had a heart for the Lord.

When Israel's first human king, Saul, became insecure and jealous, David and some of his supporters ran off to live on the run instead of attacking back. It was an act of respect that he continued all the way up until hearing the news of Saul's death. David finally came back to take his place as Israel's next king. Prior to this change in circumstances, the majority of the tribes of Israel recognized a son of Saul, Ishbosheth, as the king. After his murder (2 Samuel 4), the tribes finally turned to David to lead them. In every sense of the word, the Lord kept His promise to make David king. David went on to reclaim land that belonged to God's people and establish a kingdom on earth meant to reflect the values of heaven.

Jerusalem was the capital city David established for himself. Its massive landscape made it a stronghold against attackers, its internal location made it easier to communicate with the rest of the country, and its external geography placed it near other nations David formed relationships with. One such connection was with the King of Tyre who sent craftsmen to build David a house.

One fatal error David made was he began to think too politically. He took on concubines and wives like the other kings of the area did, which was a direct violation of Deuteronomy 17:17. It may have been to create political alliances, but it ended up causing him the most internal struggles amongst his family members later on. Although the Lord could have penalized him for this, he mercifully continued to build up David as a king. The new king's heart after God was displayed in everything from how he honored the ark to his own worship in the streets.

God did pushback on David's eagerness through the prophet Nathan. When David sought to build an impressive building to house the Ark of the Covenant, Nathan warned him that his spiritual ambition wasn't in sync with the Lord's desires. To avoid letting David become another King Saul who sought to please God through sacrifice instead of obedience, the Lord had to reign David in here and on other occasions. God did so not to oppress David, but to prepare his heart for the victories and fame that lay ahead.

OUR STORY

Our actions of worship don't in themselves please God. It's easy to want to prove ourselves or our love for Him through something tangible, whether we're raising our hands during praise music or dropping money into an offering plate. These are great ways to express what's inside of you, but only if such praise actually is inside of you.

Even when your relationship with God has been reconciled you still struggle with living in a broken world and may have built up habits the Lord has to save you from. It can feel like every day you're "finally" realizing what it means to have a relationship with Him. If you've been on a spiritual journey that hasn't felt like it's had progress in a long while or if you've had a rebellious spirit you're just now turning away from, you may want to take dramatic leaps toward God to satisfy that gap.

Perhaps one of David's most outstanding qualities was his passion for God that he tried to let out in external ways. It was a real passion that wasn't superficial or selfish. It was evidence that he truly treasured God and desired a connection with Him every day (Psalm 42:1-2). David lived a life that was consciously given to the Lord and his plans, from the music he played to the battles he won in God's name. You may not be fighting Goliath or ruling a kingdom, but you can draw great inspiration from David regarding what "praise and worship" is no matter what your life is like.

OTHERS' STORY

The elders of Israel were responsible to make sure that those in leadership were qualified for the role. David has spent time living among the Philistines, so when they anointed him they recognized he was a true Israelite in heritage, able to lead, and had a clear calling from God. According to 1 Chronicles 12, more than 340,000 soldiers came to celebrate and take part in the ceremony where David was anointed king.

We all need others in our lives who will check our blind spots, make sure we're people of integrity and protect others from the harm that we could inflict upon them if we gave into temptation. Elders served this role in the Bible and often do in churches; however, you will need to find your own set of "elders" who can speak into your life from a place of maturity. They need to be the types of people who will ask how we're doing at trusting God to help us overcome sin in our lives, forgive others, live humbly, manifest the fruit of the Spirit, and do acts of mercy and justice.

This isn't easy to find because many people fear if they hold you accountable, you'll hold them accountable. It's tempting for others to put a safe amount of effort into this because they may not be as willing for you to look into their lives as you are to let them look into yours. Any type of arrangement you have with others like this needs to be anchored by a relationship versus a legalistic sense of duty.

THE WORLD'S STORY

If you've ever looked at an old world map or globe from long ago, you'll notice changes in how various territories are named. Some countries or regions seem to change from one year to the next, while others have taken on a new identity after several centuries of a different identification. Even the United States of America is just over a couple of centuries old.

The world is unstable in more ways than merely geography. The stock market rises and falls without any warning, fashion and technology shift the moment you invest into either, and today's popular music becomes tomorrow's oldies station. Even the most popular celebrity whose face is splattered all over the media feels the pressure to constantly make his or her mark to stay in the forefront.

Thankfully, God doesn't change like the world does (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17). The world is fickle and unstable in its values, yet our King remains the true standard that has the final word on all things and all people. The world should dislike Christians on some level—not because of our hypocrisy, but because we are the needles that the Lord uses to inject a kind of spiritual penicillin into the sickness of sin.

Jesus provides us with the model of the extent it may require to get the point across. By giving up His own life, He reminds us that the light of eternity matters more than this present darkness. Christ confronted the corruption of religion and the brokenness of lost people in the same conversations, never seeking to condemn but to correct.