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WHAT'S IN YOUR TEACHING GUIDE

This Teaching Guide has three purposes:

- to give the teacher tools for focusing on the content of the session in the Study Guide.
- to give the teacher additional Bible background information.
- to give the teacher variety and choice in preparation.

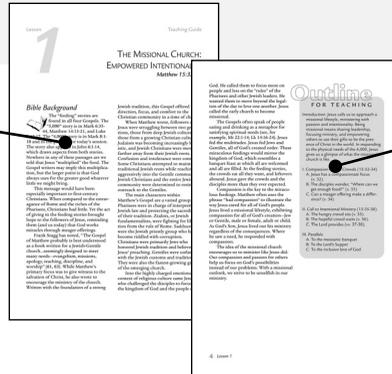
The Teaching Guide includes two major components: Teacher Helps and Teacher Options.

Teacher Helps

Bible Background

The Study Guide is your main source of Bible study material.

This section helps you more fully understand and interpret the Scripture text.



Teaching Outline

provides you with an outline of the main themes in the Study Guide.

Teacher Options

The next three sections provide a beginning, middle, and end for the session, with focus paragraphs in between.

Focus Paragraphs

are printed in italics at the top of the page because they are the most important part of the Teaching Guide. These paragraphs will help you move your class from “what the text meant” to “what the text means.”

You Can Choose!

There is more material in each session than you can use, so choose the options from each section to tailor the session to the needs of your group.

Prepare Before the Session

Read the session for today in the Study Guide. Then read the options in this Teaching Guide, placing checkmarks beside the activities you plan to include. After you have decided which options to use, gather the appropriate materials.

THE ADOLSCENT DAVID: WAGING BATTLES OF GIANT PROPORTIONS

1 Samuel 17:1-51

Bible Background



Perhaps no biblical scholar has provided us with a more insightful, carefully considered portrait of David than Walter Brueggemann. Commenting in *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination & Memory*, Brueggemann points out the very measured pace of the story (31). The first thirty verses of 1 Samuel 17 introduce us to the characters in this drama and set the scene for a brief but violent encounter.

The Philistine army and the forces of Israel faced each other from hillside encampments above the Valley of Elah. Among the ranks of the Philistines was a gargantuan strongman, Goliath of Gath. One can imagine Goliath as the worst of playground bullies. He was bigger, stronger, and meaner than the biggest and “baddest” of the Israelites. His physical presence was made even more impressive by his seemingly impregnable armor and his advanced weaponry. Despite his size and protective armor, however, Goliath was not invincible. Weighed down by 126 pounds of armor, he was unable to move quickly, and his face was not protected (Cartledge, 215).

The Philistine military decided to trot Goliath out before the army of Israel to “call out” any individual to fight him to the death. To the survivor’s army would go the victory and all the spoils of battle. Goliath’s ego seemed as grand as his body,

and he taunted the army of Saul without mercy. Forty days into this daily public mocking of the hopelessly intimidated Hebrews, David arrived on the scene. This day would prove to be great for Israel and difficult for the giant from Gath.

To the observer, David seemed an unworthy opponent for Goliath. Like most soldiers of the Israelite army, he was not a trained soldier. The entire Hebrew army, including David’s brothers, wanted no part of Goliath. When David’s older brother Eliab—the firstborn of Jesse and one of the many paralyzed with fear—heard that David volunteered to take on this Goliath, he spoke harshly of his younger brother, identifying him as one with an evil heart. Courage is often an affront to those who lack it.

Saul, the “people’s choice” and reigning monarch of Israel, summoned David (God’s choice). Desperate times call for desperate measures. David was willing, and Saul’s soldiers were wanting. Goliath, it seemed to David, was just a bigger version of the predators he had slain with Yahweh’s help as a shepherd. He had pulled his father’s lambs from the mouths of lions. David would extricate the Hebrew army from Goliath’s jaws. David would be the champion of Israel.

Saul, in a moment of ironic nobility, decided not to send this lamb to the slaughter without the benefit of his very own sword and armor. Donning this royal battle attire, David looked like a small boy

wearing his father's topcoat and galoshes. Instead, he opted for five stones and his trusty sling. David, unlike Goliath and Saul, did not trust in arms. His trust was placed in what he had, the familiar, and in whom he knew (Brueggemann, 33). So armed, he drew near to the Philistine.

Before they engaged in combat, David and Goliath engaged in a war of words. The Philistine's disdain for the shepherd boy was intense. The behemoth boasted that he would dispatch David easily. David was the longest long shot of all.

What Goliath did not know was that David had a "secret weapon." David stood before the one who mocked the God of Israel empowered by the very God the giant mocked. David told the Philistine that God would be neither defied nor mocked. To prove it, David would strike Goliath down, showing all gathered there that the sword and the spear, even when wielded by a giant, must yield to the awesome power of the covenant God. David was true to his word. He recognized the vulnerability in the one deemed invulnerable. Using the skills he learned as protector of the flock, it took but one well-placed stone. Goliath fell dead on the valley floor, and the Philistines fled before the re-energized Israelites.

This is a powerful moment in the history of the Hebrew people. The God of David, the God of Israel, is a God who delivers. In both of David's speeches, first to Saul and then to Goliath, we are pointed beyond David to Yahweh (Ibid., 35). David is the star of this drama, with Eliab, Saul, and Goliath in supporting roles—but the story is not about them. It is all about God. Without Yahweh, David would have become another notch on Goliath's belt. Empowered by faith in the God of Abraham, David survived and delivered the people.

Outline

FOR TEACHING

Introduction: As we read this story, we become aware that the element we focus on the most, the slaying of the giant by the shepherd boy, is merely the climactic moment in a story that reveals the power of God. God's power is revealed in the dialogue and interaction that precedes the well-aimed stone flung from a boy's sling.

- I. The Setting (17:1-3)
 - A. The Elah Valley (vv. 1-2)
 - B. The combatants—the army of Saul and the Philistines (v. 3)
- II. The Philistine Champion (17:4-11).
 - A. Goliath, the giant from Gath (v. 4)
 - B. The armor and the weaponry of the Philistine (vv. 5-7)
 - C. The challenge to face him "mano a mano" (vv. 8-10)
 - D. The intimidation factor (v. 11)
- III. The Shepherd Boy Responds (17:12-30)
 - A. David, the young son, the errand boy (vv. 12-18)
 - B. David is stunned upon hearing Goliath's taunts and affronts to God (vv. 19-27)
 - C. Sibling rivalry (vv. 28-30)
- IV. David with King Saul (17:31-37)
 - A. David as a volunteer for the Israelite army (vv. 31-32)
 - B. The shepherd boy's convincing case (vv. 33-37)
- V. Preparation for Battle (17:38-40).
 - A. Saul's armor—not for David (vv. 38-39)
 - B. A shepherd's weapon (17:40)
- VI. The Confrontation in the Valley (17:41-51a)
 - A. Goliath's scorn (vv. 41-44)
 - B. The shepherd boy's retort (vv. 45-47)
 - C. A giant is slain (vv. 48-51a)

A Way to Begin

We live in a world where the meek and disenfranchised remain on the receiving end of taunts and threats from would-be “giants” in all shapes and sizes. There are far more “Goliaths” in physicians’ waiting rooms, boardrooms, classrooms, family rooms, and even churches than there are on athletic fields or in political campaigns. Most giants we encounter are as formidable in their own way as the big fellow from Gath. Some of our “Goliaths” are long-time acquaintances—we’ve been battling them for years. Others, we have yet to identify, but they will make an appearance on our personal radar screen before long. How might we prepare for the inevitable confrontations? **How do we develop the kind of trust in God that enables us to challenge and defeat the giants most people would run from?**

○ Exercise Your Faith

Trusting Jesus frees us to transform faith into an action word. Church recreation outreach centers sometimes post a banner with these words—*Exercise Your Faith*. The more we exercise our faith, the more we trust Jesus; as we trust him more, we become more like him.

Saul, the people’s choice as Israel’s first monarch, seemed to place his trust in weapons of war. His faith in Yahweh never entered the exercise room, and fear paralyzed him. The “things” he trusted, though powerful, had limitations. Truthfully, nobody in his army could stand up to Goliath, not even Saul. Yet that same “Goliath” fell before a boy who dared to trust God.

A little girl, when she first learned Psalm 56:3, sometimes would get it mixed up, and say, “I am afraid when I trust in thee.” However, trusting Jesus can be scary. However, if we’re fully committed to following Jesus, we have to set that fear aside and exercise our faith. There are days when our trust in Jesus doesn’t get much of a workout. But there are days when we walk through a door and encounter “Goliath.” Using the Resource Kit item “Twenty-first-Century Goliaths,” ask the learners to list some of the “Goliaths” we face. When the list is complete, ask the group to place a checkmark by all the “Goliaths” beyond God’s power to contain and defeat.

Questions

- How do we exercise our faith in our community?
- If nothing is beyond God’s power, why do we sometimes fail to trust God?

○ Whom Do You Trust?

Remind the learners that, in Jesus, God’s provision for all humanity is complete. Trusting the truth of that statement sets us free from the kind of fear that provoked Eliab to lash out at his little brother. From a worldly perspective, David went into battle woefully under-equipped. Tony Cartledge’s commentary on this text points out that when modern believers fall prey to the discouraging Goliath-like obstacles of life, they often do so with little hope that there really is a living God who loves and cares for them. As the Hebrew army, they view God as irrelevant. The difference between growing people of faith and non-practicing religionists may come down to whether they know God as a cultural icon or as a living presence (224).

Questions

- Much of the world views God as a cultural icon. How has the church contributed to this image?
- How has the living presence of God equipped you, or people you know, to stand up confidently to life’s greatest challenges?

B A Way to Explore Scripture

Two hundred times, maybe more. How about you? In one half-century of reading and studying the Bible, this writer has read the story of David and Goliath repeatedly.

Guess what? The text speaks to me in a different and unique way every time I read it. Scripture is dynamic in that it has the power to transform our lives in unique, Christlike ways—if we will open our hearts to it.

This story is one of transition and transformation. Even as he sent David out to face certain death, Saul became a monarch in transition. He would spend the remainder of his reign in the shadow of this shepherd boy. When the Hebrew army cowered in fear, David refused to allow the giant follower of Dagon to belittle and defy the God of Israel. That day, David grew up—and Israel would grow up with him.

○ A King Must Lead

Saul was, at best, a reluctant leader. However, surrounding himself with an army of farmers and shepherds, Saul had his share of victories. Under his leadership, Israel was an emerging power in a remote region of the ancient world. The Philistine forces were no more formidable than Israel's. Effectively, the battle was a stalemate between the Philistines and Israelites.

A Philistine came up with the idea of “champions” dueling with total victory going to the survivor. It was a common practice and particularly appealing to the Philistines. For forty days, Goliath had called out the Israelite champion; however, Israel did not recognize the champion in their midst—the living God. Saul had to endure the taunts of Goliath, for in his mind, he was impotent to stop them.

Even when David came on the scene, Saul would not take him seriously. When he finally acquiesced to the shepherd boy's wishes, Saul mistakenly tried to equip him with his own conventional weapons. The king only evoked the name of the Lord as a last resort when he sent David out. Perhaps as the anointed leader of the covenant people, he should have called upon the covenant God forty days sooner. In many ways, this day was the beginning of the end for Saul.

Questions

- How did Saul's worldview hinder his ability to lead a nation?
- What is the most important characteristic for church leaders to possess?
- Can the church have the look of being successful while our effectiveness as a kingdom outpost is slipping away?

○ Growing Pains

Anyone who has ever worked with middle school students surely prays, even now, for the parents and parent figures of adolescents. Adolescence is fraught with danger. Yet some young people make astounding statements of faith and seem fearless in the face of intimidating obstacles. Some say that adolescents haven't yet been beaten down by life—but they are selling them short. Like David, many young people have an ongoing personal relationship with the God of all heaven and earth. That relationship leads to a transformation and an authentic, maturing faith. Adolescence is not a phase to be survived. It is a time of transformation, with God and for God.

Questions

- How do we in the church honor the faith walk of adolescents?
- Adults seem to run the world and the church. What are some of the appropriate leadership roles for youth in your church?
- How does “no pain, no gain” apply to adolescence?

C A Way to End

*So let's all "armor up" with the Spirit and rush out of church to confront the "Goliaths" we have identified. And Saul says, "You go first, shepherd boy." The dangerous world that we live in today calls out desperately for more "Davids," yet too many in our churches live and lead like Saul. Perhaps the reason is that they've taken the field against Goliath before and seemingly been vanquished. Difficulties like disease, the corporate world, family squabbles, "the system," and death are not easily defeated. Yet none of those "Goliaths" can separate us from the love and the power of the living God. **In this closing time, use one of these options to challenge your learners to be more like David, the shepherd boy who trusted the living God.***

○ Looking Back, Moving On

No matter where you live, there are "Goliaths" to face. With this story as background, ask your learners to think of experiences in the life of your church or in the lives of individual believers where spiritual transformation occurred as "Goliaths" were confronted and defeated. Looking to the future—God's future—lead the group in a discussion of the following questions.

Questions

- If your church were full of "Davids," what would be the first "Goliath" in your community to fall?
- Does your church have the basic resources necessary to meet "Goliath"?
- Do you have as much as David had?
- What could be holding us back from the challenges God places before us?

○ Very Present!

Challenge the learners to be of good courage. We can't always pick our "Goliaths." Sometimes they just appear. On those days, we must remember that God is our refuge and our strength. Ask someone to read Psalm 46 as a comforting and hopeful closing to this time of study.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though

the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Come, behold the works of the LORD; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

2

THE ADULT DAVID:
DANCING BEFORE THE LORD*2 Samuel 6:1-15**Bible Background*

With the consolidation of power, David imported a concept of kingship to Israel that far exceeded anything Saul could have imagined. Wisely, David set up court in the “neutral ground” of Jerusalem, away from his home turf in Hebron. He envisioned this neutral ground becoming common ground for a unified Israel. Our text is part of the “Ark Narrative,” and it chronicles the movement of the ark of the covenant, the most precious ancient symbol of Israel, from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem. Seeking a connecting point that would legitimize Jerusalem not only as the city of David, but also as the city of Yahweh, David brilliantly thought of the ark, the very embodiment of the presence and power of God. Tony Cartledge notes, “In the absence of anyone strong enough to forbid him, David determined to transport the ark to Jerusalem and thus transport Jerusalem to a new position in Israel” (432).

The Davidic form of governance resembled the royal courts of the Near East. Saul had ruled without benefit of a mercenary army, a harem fit for an ancient king, and a royal city. David’s regime was all of that, but he needed at least the acceptance of the old guard of Israel to certify his kingship and his city. David had to make it clear to tribal Israel

that he would reign as God’s chosen representative, the authentic king. The acquisition of the ark was an act of faith that would define his kingdom as submissive to the kingdom of the Most High.

David clearly understood the holy nature of the ark, as his later dance illustrates, but this strategic move was also a calculated gamble to lure the old conservatives to Jerusalem. They, too, knew the nature of the ark. With this bold move by the former shepherd boy turned warrior king, the old-line leadership would be forced to follow the ark, and to do so would require tacit assent to the new royal apparatus (Brueggemann, 248). Moving the ark to Jerusalem was an act of faith and a bold stroke of political genius.

David knew that the ark was much more than a box of relics. The portable throne of God, it was the embodiment of both the name and presence of God. The ark was holy. David took a select honor guard to Kiriath-jearim to retrieve the ark from the home of Abinadab. A special cart was constructed to transport the ark, and Abinadab’s sons, Uzzah and Ahio, accompanied it to Jerusalem with Ahio walking in front. The procession was an event! To celebrate God and to celebrate life, David and his royal guard danced mightily before the ark, sang, and played instruments. It was a worship celebration (vv. 1-5).

The celebration came to a screeching halt in verse 6 when Uzzah was struck

dead. He touched the ark while attempting to steady it after one of the oxen misstepped. Today we find it odd and unfair that the wrath of God was kindled against someone who was trying to help. There have been many explanations. Levitical code violations are a possible rationale, as well as the possibility that Uzzah was a layperson, not a priest. Brueggemann explains, “The holiness of God is indeed present in the ark, but that holiness is not readily available. To touch the ark is to impinge on God’s holiness, to draw too close and presume too much” (249). Ultimately, this event troubles us because we live in a world where the sense of the holy has almost been lost. However, those who were there may have wondered why everyone wasn’t smitten (Chafin, 254).

Angered and stunned by the death of Uzzah, David halted the parade. Perhaps God was sending him a message. Perhaps using the ark for political gain was akin to manipulating Yahweh. Possibly because the Israelites were now scared to death of it, the ark was placed in the home of Obed-edom, the Gittite who may have been a Philistine. It remained there for three months, bringing prosperous times to the homeowner.

Convinced by the blessings on the home of Obed-edom, David resumed the celebration of bringing the ark to Jerusalem (vv. 11-12). This time, David himself led the procession, rejoicing every step of the way. David may have had a royal court and all the accoutrements of an ancient king, but he tossed pomp and circumstance aside and danced before the ark—with all his might. A united Israel was with God, and God was with Israel. All of Jerusalem was wildly happy.

Outline

FOR TEACHING

Introduction: This narrative provides clear insight to David the king and to the David who worships the King. Here, David displays the genius of a statesman, one who understands the importance of public perception in the unification of a divided country. Here, too, we see that David has a heart for worship and a reverent yet celebrative appreciation for the holy. The David in this story is a grown-up, and as an adult he continues to honor and worship a holy God.

- I. Remembering the Ark (6:1-5)
 - A. The recovery team is chosen (v. 1).
 - B. The ark has been in a safe place (vv. 2-3).
 - C. The parade embarks for Jerusalem (vv. 4-5).
- II. Uzzah—A Troubling Death (6:6-11)
 - A. Uzzah kindles God’s wrath (vv. 6-7).
 - B. David reacts emotionally (vv. 8-9).
 - C. The ark is placed in temporary quarters (6:10-11).
- III. The Celebration Resumes (6:12-16)
 - A. The temporary resting place of the ark is blessed (v. 12).
 - B. The people partake in a sacrificial ritual (v. 13).
 - C. David dances intensely (v. 14).
 - D. The people sing, shout, trumpet (v. 15).
 - E. The dancing king is despised (v. 16).
- IV. Offerings and Blessings (6:17-19)
 - A. David serves as priest (v. 17).
 - B. The people are blessed by their king, the worshiper (vv. 18-19).

A Way to Begin

A This portion of the “Ark Narrative” introduces the reader to an adult David who has achieved much and hopes to achieve more. No longer the prodigy, David sits on the throne of Israel. He uses this power to unify Israel politically and socially, but primarily spiritually. In his heart he knew the great unifying principle in Israel was worship of the holy. To tribal Israel, the ark was holy. Therefore, David brought the holy to Jerusalem and led the public worship, “dancing” before the ark. Just as Yahweh empowered him to defeat Goliath, only God would empower David to be king. God was at the center of David’s worship, and the throne of David was subservient to the throne of God. **As you teach this session, challenge learners to identify the object(s) of their worship. Who is on the throne of their life?**

○ A Dance to Remember

The last time most of us saw the ark of the covenant, it was being loaded into a vast warehouse of other artifacts at the close of a Steven Spielberg movie. Shaking his head, Indiana Jones comments, “They don’t know what they’ve got there.” For twenty years, during the reign of Saul, the authentic ark had likely stood gathering dust in the spare bedroom of Abinadab in Kiriath-jearim. It was as if the Israelites “didn’t know what they had there.” David knew that Jerusalem, the new “central city” for all of Israel, would never really function as such without the centrality of the holy. David also knew that he could not effectively lead the people without God at the center of his life. As he danced before the ark, David acknowledged both to himself and to the people that Yahweh sat on the throne of David’s life. Remind learners that we need to worship mightily as David did. Distribute copies of the Resource Kit page “Dancing Before the Lord,” and direct learners to write their responses. When they are finished, allow time for sharing.

Questions

- Given that God’s presence abides with us, do we still need special places to meet God?
- King David, the head of state, danced mightily before the ark. What does that say to us about worship?

○ No Substitute

Dallas Willard has an interesting perspective, drawn from J. B. Phillips’ book *Your God Is Too Small*. He believes the point is not “Your God is too small *to meet your needs*,” but “Your God is so small that *you can fail to relentlessly worship and adore him*.” In the renovated mind (and the redeemed heart with Christ at the center), God constantly stands as uniquely and supremely worthy. Worship is at once the overall character of the renovated life and the only safe place for a human being to stand (Willard, 107). If Willard is correct, King David dancing before the ark, totally immersed in worship, was in the safest possible place. The places of danger are those where substitutes attempt to dethrone God from the center of our lives. Use the following questions to discuss the “substitutes” that challenge God for the throne of our lives.

Questions

- As twenty-first-century believers, what do we substitute for the holy?
- Can worship share the center of our lives with anything else?
- Why might we agree with the idea that when we worship with God at the center, everything else goes right? Why might we disagree?

B A Way to Explore Scripture

As we study today's text, we must begin with an understanding of the importance of the ark in ancient Israel. *Tony Cartledge says, "No object in Israel was more precious than the ark of the covenant. It was a treasure of singular sacredness. The power of God was in it. The presence of God was upon it. The promises of God went with it. Nothing in Israel was more holy. Nothing in Israel was closer to God than the ark of the covenant" (442). The ark is lost to us today, but as Cartledge comments, "God knows that if we had it, we would turn it into an object of worship, like some believers do with the Bible" (444). This story reminds us that even in the present "information age," a time of reason and enlightened thought, the most enlightened thought of all is that elements of this world are so closely connected to God that they are sacred, holy. Every time we look into the mirror, we see one of God's holy creations, and we should treat it as such.*

○ Interruptions, Interruptions

Begin your study by reading the outline of the text, commenting on both the practical and sacred reasons that compelled David to bring the ark to Jerusalem. As you continue through the outline, draw attention to the interruption.

Popular theology influences how we view God more than we wish to admit. For some of us, the images of the movement of the ark to Jerusalem come straight from the "epic" motion picture *David and Bathsheba*, starring Gregory Peck as David, Susan Hayward as Bathsheba, and Raymond Massey as Nathan. The scene of Uzzah's death is particularly compelling. The ark processional is moving along toward Jerusalem when the cart carrying the ark starts to tip over. Uzzah rushes to secure the ark. As soon as he touches the ark, he collapses and dies. It's as if he touched a high-voltage wire. Someone watching the film might take two thoughts away from that vivid scene. First, why would God zap some poor guy who was just trying to help? Second, that ark was one powerful gold box.

Questions

- Could Uzzah's unfortunate death simply be a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time? How might David's response to Uzzah's death inform us?

- In the church today, are we losing the awe, the respect, and the fear of that which is holy? Do we attempt to conform the holy to our purposes? If so, at what cost?
- When it comes to worship, what's most important?

○ Mature Leadership

Both in the practical political leadership of an emerging, unified Israel and as a leader who understands the necessity of the holy in his life and the kingdom he serves, David responds in this story as an adult. He considers his decisions carefully and prudently, revealing both statesman-like political acumen and a maturing faith in the covenant God. The shepherd boy has become an adult. That does not mean David has become incapable of joyous celebration and worship. It does give us a glimpse of the kind of servant leadership God expects from mature adults. Consider these discussion questions.

Questions

- David's political savvy is obvious in this story. He knew what to do to bring credibility to his court and to Jerusalem, and he did it. What was the source of his political wisdom?
- How do we serve in a mature fashion without diminishing the joy and the fun that is part of serving Jesus?

C A Way to End

We live in a country that claims to be Christian. However, our text from 2 Samuel begs the question, “Is the worship of God—the God of the Covenant, the God revealed to us in Christ Jesus—at the center of our lives?” Do we give evidence of a maturing faith by clinging to the holy? The ark was lost long ago, but the spirit of God that dwelled in the ark is still around—in us. If we will only allow it, the power of God will flow through us into a world where that kind of power is in short supply. How do we yield to the only power that can unify a fractured world? We do what David, the wise and mature leader, did—we dance before God. We worship. Hallelujah!

○ Ravished with Delight

Read to the learners these 300-year-old words of Thomas Watson. They speak to the kind of dancing our Scripture text describes.

He who is in love, his thoughts are ever upon the object. He who loves God is ravished and transported with the contemplation of God. “When I awake, I am still with Thee” (Ps. 139:18). The thoughts are as travelers in the mind. David’s thoughts kept heaven-road, “I am still with Thee.” God is the treasure, and where the treasure is, there is the heart. By this we may test our love to God. What are our thoughts most upon? Can we say we are ravished with delight when we think on God?

Questions

- Can we say we are ravished with delight when we think on God?
- How long has it been since you really worshiped?



○ A New Ark

Share these thoughts with the group: The ark of the covenant was sacred to the ancient Hebrews because it was the resting place of the spirit of God. It was holy. By the grace of God, by the provision of God’s Son, and by authentic faith in the saving work of the Son, we too are holy. We are the new ark. Sometimes the world has to look long and hard to see the holy in us. Sometimes we put the holy on a back shelf—out of sight, out of mind, gathering dust. But the power of the holy does not diminish no matter how much it is forgotten or ignored. It is there, waiting to move to the center so that the world might see. Close with this prayer:

Lord, we would dance before you. In this moment speak to our hearts and help us know all that separates us from really worshiping you.

We seek your holy presence, Lord. As we think now of the times we have worshiped most deeply and joyously, lead us to dance before you again, and again, and again.

Hear our prayer, O God; you alone are worthy of our worship and our praise. Let the dance begin. Amen.

3

THE MIDLIFE DAVID:
FRUSTRATED AND FOOLISH*2 Samuel 11**Bible Background*

From the time he dropped Goliath with a rock, David's life had been improving.

Certainly he experienced a few bumps in the road, but his rise to the position of unquestioned leader of Israel was always sure. The armies of Saul fell before his guerilla warfare strategy. He began his reign in the south but sought to unify Israel; eventually the northern territories were added to his kingdom. David had devised the successful plan to make his city, Jerusalem, the Holy City by transporting the long-forgotten ark to a new resting place there. As king of the united Israel, he led successful military campaigns that secured the borders from external threats. David brought the organization of a central government to Israel and even managed to bolster internal unity by fairly treating the descendents of his predecessor.

By midlife, David's approval ratings were off the chart. His greatest enemies had all been crushed or were in the process of falling before his army. Direct leadership of the Hebrew military had been delegated to Joab, and with the government bureaucracy up and running, David could just sit back in his rooftop garden, partake of a cool drink, and perhaps take a snooze. He could finally enjoy being king, and that is where the trouble began (Cartledge, 506). David, it

seems, still had a formidable enemy before him. Retired from battle, perhaps a bit frustrated and certainly foolish, David would be forced to take the field again. This time, however, the powerful foe would be himself.

We learn with the pronouncement in verse 1 that things had changed. The army was off fighting the Ammonites, but David, the one who had been called to "go out before and fight our battles" (1 Sam 8:20), remained in Jerusalem. Considering his age and position, it was not disgraceful. However, the irony here is tangible. Staying behind, disconnected from the fray, David faced much greater personal risk. Cartledge says, "The disgrace David acquires does not derive from what he did not do on the battlefield, but from what he did while away from the battlefield" (496).

The naps we fought as children often become the close friends of midlifers. Be wary, though. David never recovered from one of his. Waking from his rooftop siesta, David looked down from the parapet and gazed upon a woman bathing in a neighboring courtyard. Perhaps it was simple lust or the desire for another conquest; maybe it was romance. Whatever the reason, David's response to what he saw was horribly selfish and devastatingly wrong.

After inquiring about this woman and learning that she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of David's military leaders off fighting the Ammonites, David sent for her. They lay together, and the woman, Bathsheba, became pregnant. With Uriah out of the picture and palace walls that talk, David was now nine months away from a press conference he didn't want to have.

In the early stages of David's cover-up plan, he summoned Uriah from the battlefield so the Hittite might have sexual relations with his wife and provide a necessary solution to this pregnancy problem. David met with Uriah upon his arrival and encouraged him to rest, hoping that would include time with Bathsheba. Instead of going to his home, Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace. Learning of Uriah's actions, a stunned king asked the foreigner why he didn't take advantage of this situation. Uriah responded that he simply couldn't lie with his wife in the comforts of his home while his comrades remained in the field, while the ark was imperiled, while his commander Joab was at the front. Much of what was important to Uriah was at risk, and he would not give in to his desires while David's warriors were denying themselves.

Next, David tried to get Uriah drunk. When that failed, David escalated his sin by planning Uriah's death. David asked Uriah to be the courier for the sealed orders that would lead to his death. Joab immediately understood the order and tossed Uriah into the center of a killing field. His death went according to plan. Bathsheba lamented for the accepted period, and then she and David married. Problem solved, right? Spiritual blinders firmly in place, David failed to see his action and the actions of those he used to carry out his orders as evil. Yet someone else saw these events in a much different way. The ever-watchful Yahweh had been paying close attention, and Yahweh, we read, was not pleased.

Outline

FOR TEACHING

Introduction: David is the heroic, anointed king of Israel, yet he is about to transform unparalleled public accomplishment into disastrous personal failure. Brueggeman says, "This narrative is more than we care to know about David and more than we can bear to understand about ourselves" (272).

- I. The Israelites vs. the Ammonites (11:1)
 - A. David turns the field command over to Joab.
 - B. The king stays in his palace, supposedly out of harm's way.
- II. David and Bathsheba (11:2-5)
 - A. Bathsheba's beauty entices David (v. 2).
 - B. Exercising his kingly power, David has this married woman brought to the palace to satisfy his sexual desire (vv. 3-4).
 - C. Bathsheba becomes pregnant (v. 5).
- III. David's Cover-up Plan (11:6-13)
 - A. David draws Joab, the fierce troubleshooter, into the plan (v. 6).
 - B. Uriah foils the plan when he places duty above desire (vv. 7-13).
 - C. Uriah maintains military discipline even while inebriated (vv. 10-13).
- IV. David's Murderous Plan (11:14-25)
 - A. David commands Uriah to unknowingly deliver his own death warrant to Joab (vv. 14-15).
 - B. Joab leads Uriah to his death (vv. 16-17).
 - C. Joab crafts a message within a message to David (vv. 18-22).
 - D. David responds to the message with more deception (vv. 23-25).
- V. David's Attempt for Closure (11:26-27)
 - A. David weds Bathsheba, and she bears a son (vv. 26-27a).
 - B. The Lord God is displeased with the behavior (v. 27b).

A Way to Begin

A The Apostle Paul is clear about the universality of sin (Rom 3:9). **We each must choose how we deal with our sins.** Scripture directs us to confess our sins and open our hearts to the grace found in Christ Jesus (1 Jn 1:9). Yet confession can be painful. Particularly in the short term, confession can place our relationships, our lifestyle, and even our vocation in peril. Knowing this, we too often choose the path of deceit to conceal our misdeeds rather than confess them. For ancient David or a modern-day head of state, God's laws apply to all of us. This exposé of David's sin and cover-up speaks to those of us who have known the tyranny of living under a lie. It reminds us that as we try to manipulate others, as we mask our sin, we are playing a sad shadow game, ultimately manipulating ourselves. You may use the following activities to open your teaching time, focusing on the central theme of the session.

○ Same Old Story

There is much to admire about David. Yet at midlife, something about David had changed. If we were not so familiar with the issues facing most folks in the middle years, we would be shocked. Nothing in David's life experience prepares us for the evil described in chapter 11. David, "a man after God's own heart," was a wife-stealing murderer?

However, such is the story. Sin stories, after a while, tend to sound alike—virtually all sins are some form of wanting to be gods ourselves, taking charge of our own lives, asserting control over the lives of others. Not one of us reading this story has any difficulty finding ourselves in it. We are sinners. The precise details of our sin may not correspond to David's, but the presence and recurrence of sin do (Peterson, 183).

Questions

- How might midlifers be particularly susceptible to sin traps like the one that snared David?
- The cynical David justified Uriah's death as a casualty of war. How do our actions sometimes create casualties of war? Have you ever been such a casualty?
- How would you advise a midlifer who is facing many of the transitions David faced?

○ Idle Hands and Eyes

It was a problem for David, and it is a problem today: Too little to do and so much time to do it. Power is at once tantalizing and debilitating. Once the hunted guerilla leader sleeping on the run in caves, David now has time for an afternoon nap. Once the field commander leading his troops in battle, David now sends a general to do his leading. Once the lead dancer before Yahweh, David now lives as if Yahweh were either blind or as disconnected as he is. David must have been bored. Too much prosperity can be a bad thing, and for him it became a stumbling block. It began with a lustful glance after an afternoon nap, moved to deception, and ended with murder. Cartledge says, "If David had been doing what good kings are supposed to do, he would have been winning a war instead of wooing Uriah's wife" (511). Idleness is a problem for us as well.

Questions

- Timesaving devices are a part of our culture. The value of many things is directly related to how much time they save us. As we experience more free time, are we, like David, more susceptible to temptation?
- Is it possible for the church to become like David at midlife, at a plateau, controlling and disengaged from the world? How can such a sad state be avoided?

B A Way to Explore Scripture

*David, the shining star of Israel, the personhood of royal power, reached midlife. Embroiled in conflict with the Ammonites, the army of Israel was commanded by Joab while the “slayer of ten thousands” stayed behind the walls of his palace. Removed from the military action, David became distracted by the beautiful Bathsheba, succumbed to his lustful desire, and misused his power. Thus began an ever-deepening mess of deceit and sin that forever marked David as an accomplice to murder and placed a nation in jeopardy. **The narrator of 2 Samuel pulls no punches as we follow David’s destructive path, indicating the Lord God was displeased.** The following learning activities may be used to help learners better understand this story.*

○ Strong Verbs

David the leader has become David the taker. Eugene Peterson says this sad story can be outlined by the usage of the seemingly amoral verb *send*. But as we read the story, we gradually realize that this is not a morally neutral word; it signals the impersonal exercise of power. By following the use of this verb we can trace David’s descent from love and obedience into calculation and cruelty.

The passage begins with a curt phrase: “David sent Joab” (v. 1). We notice nothing amiss at this point; it was David’s work to send assignments to his officers. But two verses later, David sent to inquire about Bathsheba; this was an exercise of the same authority, but not in the line of his work. When the word occurs the third time (v. 4), as “David sent” and got Bathsheba, we know that something has changed: the power that David legitimately employed to govern the kingdom, he now used to indulge a personal whim. His corruption is evident in a cluster of three “sendings” in a single verse (v. 6): “So David sent word to Joab, ‘Send me Uriah the Hittite.’ And Joab sent Uriah to David.” The writer repeats the verb to exhibit a ruthless use of power, cut free from the constraints of morality or responsibility or personal relationship. There is now nothing holding David back. The adrenaline of power was surging in his veins (182).

Questions

- How does the David who slew Goliath compare with the David we study today?
- David becomes progressively more cynical throughout the story. How do we avoid the cynical misuse of power?
- What is the source of the power that David misused? How dangerous is power cut free from the constraints of morality, responsibility, or personal relationship?

○ Wicked Web of Deceit

The web King David spun to cover up his misdeed began with himself, moved to Bathsheba, then Joab, and finally to Uriah. Using a marker board, make four columns, one for each character in the story. Ask class members to consider the following question for each character: Was the character a predator, a victim, a bystander, or a mixture of the three? Lead the class to come to a consensus on each character and label them on the display.

Questions

- Do you think David thought his plan would deceive God? What is God’s response to our deceit?
- David’s response to an unexpected message was an attempt to use all his power to control the situation. How did he do? How should we respond to the unexpected messages that come at all stages of our lives?

C A Way to End

*The man after God's own heart had a change of heart. David fell victim to lust. We should study well his story because far too often it is our story. We all have our Bathshebas, some person or power rightfully beyond our reach. **We all yield to such temptation. When we realize we have fallen, we have at least two choices: confess or cover up.** Close today's session with one of these activities.*

○ What Do You See?

Ask the class members to close their eyes, bow their heads, and in an attitude of prayer, respond silently to the following questions.

1. When you are figuratively standing on the roof of your palace, gazing down at the world below, what do you see that you want that is rightfully beyond your reach?
2. What problems might you encounter if you succumb to this desire?
3. Have you allowed such a desire to control you?
4. If so, who were/are the victims of this action?
5. Were confession, healing, and resolution brought to this situation?
6. If not, to whom can you turn to start the healing process?

Close with prayer, thanking God for the grace found in Christ Jesus, grace that will pardon and cleanse, grace enough for a king, grace enough for you and me.

○ More Than Things

The old saying goes, "Adults hope that life begins at forty—but the very great anxiety is that it ends there." Such anxiety led the king of Israel to behave as a foolish, frustrated manipulator of those around him. This tendency may be especially profound at midlife, but it is evident in all of life's stages. Young people, young adults, older adults, all of us are subject to the temptation to treat other people as things, something to possess, a means to satisfy our selfish desires. David's taking of Bathsheba, his entitlement perspective, had tragic repercussions.

Take a moment to identify those we sometimes treat as less than human, as things to be used rather than creations of God to be cherished. Ask learners to share their thoughts. Close with prayer, asking God to develop within us a Christlike mind and a heart that seeks to serve rather than control, to love rather than manipulate.

4

THE SENIOR ADULT DAVID:
PASSING ON A LEGACY

1 Kings 1:1–2:12

Bible Background

The beginning point of this historical account is David's failure. We read, "He could not get warm." Some think this is a reference to poor circulation, and they may be correct. However, given the circumstances, it is likely that the point of the opening paragraph is to report that David is impotent and, by ancient world standards, no longer fit to be king.

Walter Brueggemann views this part of the story, 1 Kings 1:5-38, as a five-scene drama. Each of David's sons is surrounded by a palace entourage blindly supportive of its candidate. The primary party leaders are the following:

Adonijah Party—*Joab*, David's chief henchman, controls key military leaders; *Abiathar*, primary leader of the "old guard" priesthood.

Solomon Party—*Benaiah*, the number-two military man, looking to depose Joab; *Zadok*, a progressive high priest, linked to the ark; *Nathan*, the prophet turned king-maker; *Bathsheba*, the would be queen-mother (12).

Scene One: The same Nathan who was shrewd enough both to condemn David for his fling with Bathsheba and to support the eventual offspring of that union (Solomon) as successor to the throne, after learning of Adonijah's pending coup, recruits Bathsheba as his

ally in the intrigue, reminding her that if Adonijah takes the throne, Solomon (and Bathsheba) might be threatened. He provides Bathsheba with a scripted message for David, one that implies a promise that may never have been made.

Scene Two: Bathsheba willingly conspires with Nathan, and she visits David. She reminds David, whose memory was a bit hazy, of the oath he supposedly swore—guaranteeing Solomon's succession. From this vague memory, a new political reality is formed. David could not renege on his "promise." Solomon would be his heir.

Scene Three: Nathan supports Bathsheba's demands, listing for the king Adonijah's abuses. Nathan subtly indicts David for leaving him out of the loop in deciding to support Adonijah. Knowing this has not happened, he is blatantly manipulating the king.

Scene Four: Nathan and Bathsheba persuade David. Solomon will follow him in the seat of power.

Scene Five: Zadok and Benaiah, leaders of the high court party, swing into action. David knows the power of "royal theatre," so he arranges for Solomon to parade to the enthronement, riding the king's own mule. Even a weakened David would assign his throne. Benaiah brings closure to the festivities by calling on Yahweh to "ordain" that which palace intrigue has enacted (Brueggemann, 17).

The palace drama now goes public, and the people are swept up in the moment. Solomon is the winner. But what about Adonijah? When the bad news hits, his supporters flee. Adonijah flees to the altar, seeking sanctuary. Solomon promises a conditional “safe conduct,” but only if Adonijah swears loyalty. Adonijah swears allegiance and is booted out of the royal court he sought to rule.

Chapter 2 marks the bloody transition of power from David to Solomon. We focus on David’s speech of counsel to his son (vv. 1-9) and the pronouncement of David’s death. The most intriguing aspect of this speech is the total incongruity between verses 1-4 and verses 5-9. David begins with a speech full of good theology, but beginning in verse 5, David’s counsel takes a radical change, and obligation to God gives way to political prudence. It seems that David has developed an “enemies list,” and Solomon must quickly deal with these threats to the state if his kingdom is to succeed.

Joab, David’s general, heads the list. Joab knew too much, so David justified Joab’s elimination by implicating him in the murder of Abner and Amasa. Next comes the dying King Barzillai. Solomon needed to act with fidelity and restraint toward this man who had provided for David as he was fleeing from Absalom’s attack. David counseled Solomon that the support of strategically placed, wealthy allies like Barzillai would enhance his ability to govern. Even David’s throne did not exist in a political vacuum.

Third on the list is Shimei. In 2 Samuel 16:5-14, Shimei publicly assaulted David. He then backed Absalom’s attempted overthrow. Shimei embodied the continuing threat of the house of Benjamin, Saul’s family, the northern faction of Israel that was never securely integrated into David’s realm. The legacy of David would be realized in Solomon, and it was necessary to protect that legacy.

Outline

FOR TEACHING

Introduction: David’s reign on the throne of Israel is coming to an end. It is time for him to set his affairs and the affairs of state in order. This succession narrative reminds us that people were lining up to assist him. Their methods included chicanery, misinformation, and the violent elimination of those who opposed them. In the midst of the political intrigue, God’s will is realized and Solomon becomes king. David’s legacy is secured.

- I. The Dilemma—An Aging King (1:1-4)
- II. Adonijah Makes His Move for the Throne (1:5-10)
 - A. Adonijah has the kingly look (vv. 5-6).
 - B. Adonijah forms a team (vv. 7-8).
 - C. A Judean “caucus” elects Adonijah (vv. 9-10).
- III. Adonijah Is Countered (1:11-31)
 - A. Nathan enlists Bathsheba as an ally (vv. 11-14).
 - B. Bathsheba coerces the king (vv. 15-21).
 - C. Nathan arrives to close the deal (vv. 22-27).
 - D. The king “remembers” and commits (vv. 28-31).
- IV. Solomon Is Anointed (1:32-40)
 - A. David plans an inaugural parade (vv. 32-37).
 - B. Long live the king (vv. 38-40)!
- V. Rough Day for the “Would-Be” King (1:41-50)
 - A. This is not the news they wanted to hear (vv. 41-48).
 - B. Adonijah seeks sanctuary from his brother (vv. 49-50).
- VI. The New King Responds (1:51-53)
- VII. The Old King Advises the New (2:1-9)
 - A. “Walk with God according to the law” (vv. 1-4).
 - B. Note the enemies list (vv. 5-9).
- VIII. The King Dies, the King Lives (2:10-12)

A Way to Begin

*What we do in life really does echo long after we are gone. The end of David's life and the end of his reign were simultaneous. His legacy was crucial not only to his family, but to Israel as well. Setting his affairs in order had both personal and national repercussions. A successor had to be found and the transition of power decisively accomplished. As his legacy was formed, David drew from the people God placed around him. The prophetic word of Nathan and the urgent plea of Bathsheba were among the voices that influenced his final decisions. The story indicates that through the scenes of this royal drama, the voice of Yahweh was heard as well. **Apart from the will and direction of God, our legacy will fall short of what it might be.** Use one of the following activities to open the teaching session and to help the learners better understand how this succession narrative might inform our personal succession narratives.*

○ Winners and Non-winners

At the close of David's reign, the party of Adonijah, the son who by birth order was next in line for the throne, and the party of Solomon, the son of Bathsheba, slugged it out to determine David's successor. However, David may have been unable to function as king, but he would choose his successor and the direction of his legacy. Nathan, Bathsheba, Zadok, and Benaiah are the king-makers in this story. From a practical, political standpoint, they were the ones who secured the throne of Israel for Solomon. They ensured that Solomon would carry on David's legacy (2 Sam 12:24).

Questions

- In this story, we see the interplay of raw politics and the reality that this difficult part of Israel's history was an arena for God's purposes. How could God be at work in such circumstances? How does this play out in Nathan's role?
- The two parties in this power struggle were locked in conflict. Too often, contemporary political or ideological confrontation takes the same track—all but making the word bipartisan an oxymoron. Is such an approach viable for those in the Christian community?
- Did David wait too long to show concern for his legacy? Are we concerned about the story we leave behind?

○ Standing Obituary

Most news agencies have on file a “standing obituary” of politicians, entertainers, and high-profile people. Should one of these celebrities die suddenly, their obituary is ready to go for publication. Researchers update these obituaries on a regular basis, listing recent accomplishments and other significant information. Using the outline provided in the Resource Kit, ask learners to compile their own standing obituary. Allow sufficient time for the group to complete this activity. Follow up with these discussion questions.

Questions

- Life really is a mixture of good and evil, joy and sorrow. Do our personal obituaries reflect that reality?
- What would you like to have in your standing obituary that is missing now? What might you do to ensure the missing part appears in the next update?
- The senior adult David had a sense of urgency to order his affairs. Should we, no matter our age, have the same sense of urgency? Why?

B A Way to Explore Scripture

The writer of *Chronicles* condensed this story of palace intrigue into one verse:

“When David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel” (1

Chr 23:1). However, *1 Kings 1* includes all the dirt. We see key players in the history of Israel in all their humanity, and that is important because their story is often our story. **Most of us are not going to serve as kingmakers, yet all of us participate in power contests at the office, in our homes, at school, and even in our churches.**

○ An Offer He Can’t Refuse

As Brueggemann points out, reading this narrative is not unlike watching *The Godfather* (22). The scene in the garden with an aging Godfather talking to his successor about the consolidation of power after he is gone is like *1 Kings 2:1-9*. In both, the dialogue between father and son begins with the recognition of common hopes and dreams. Then, without hesitation, the discussion moves to an enemies list—those who must die if the ongoing organization is to survive. Accounts must be settled, new allegiances formed, old ones strengthened. David knew Solomon understood: “You will know what you ought to do” (2:9b).

It was as if David said to Solomon, “Walk in God’s ways and keep God’s commandments. Be an obedient follower of the law and if you do—you will prosper.” That’s the formula. Brueggemann calls it the “if” of faith. If the law is faithfully followed, good things will happen (26). Here, reality steps in with the “but” of doubt. *But* things will go much easier if your opposition is eliminated. Use these questions to help learners deepen their understanding of the differences present in the story.

Questions

➤ Old Testament theology characterizes the love of God as conditional. A Christ-centered theology portrays the love of God as *unconditional*. Is it possible to combine these two ways of relating to God? How did Jesus do it (see Lk 16:19-31)?

➤ David was a person full of contradiction, caught between the claims of faith and the obvious requirements of power. How would you judge his actions? How do we relate to them?

○ The Legacy as Blessing

The story of Solomon and Adonijah has similar elements to the Esau and Jacob story found in *Genesis*. In both stories, the characters used deception to obtain “the blessing.” Differing loyalties divided the families. The father passed along his legacy to the son in the form of a blessing. The essence of blessing in the Old Testament world was deeply significant. The eldest male typically had the right of the blessing, although sometimes another child contested that right. Possibly one of the saddest scenes in the biblical story is Esau’s cry—“Bless me father, bless me too”—after Jacob had taken the blessing intended for Esau.

Many of us struggle with our family legacies too. There is a family blessing that we desperately wanted but never received. For many of us, that unfilled need colors how we see the world and how we act within it. Yet we not only need to receive a blessing, but also to give a blessing. Each of us has the power to offer blessings to others. Ask your group to talk about ways they pass on the legacy within in their families, how they bless one another. After volunteers have offered their stories, talk about ways your congregation can bless its membership. Ask the group to consider what kind of legacy the church can pass on.

C A Way to End

*In this unit, we have walked with David through the stages of life. We were with the young shepherd boy David as he slew the giant that held an army prisoner. We were there as he unified a divided country with inspired leadership that culminated in a national worship experience. We were there when he awoke from a midlife nap and gazed upon Bathsheba, committing a sin that would nearly destroy him and those around him. We were with him as his life came to a close, as he “got things in order” to preserve all that was good in his legacy and to keep God’s leader on the throne. **The key issue in the life of this hero is his relationship to Yahweh.** So it is with you and me, no matter the stage of life we are experiencing. In all stages of life we encounter the holy. That is both a blessing and a responsibility.*

○ Your Stage

Parents sometimes explain the unfortunate behavior of their children by saying they are “going through a stage.” The terrible twos begin a series of stages that culminate in adulthood. Sometimes individuals become stuck in a stage. Dallas Willard says he knows parents who are still trying to put “body English” on fifty-year-olds. Like David, we are designed to move through life in reasonably definable stages. The child becomes an adolescent, the adolescent a young adult, the young adult a median adult, the median adult a senior adult. Lead your learners to consider both the challenges and the blessings of their stage of life.

Questions

- In what stage of life are you? Could you be transitioning from one stage to another?
- What are the unique challenges of your present life stage?
- What are the unique blessings and opportunities of your present life stage?
- How does the promise of Matthew 28:20 speak to and empower you?

○ Title or Testimony?

David slew Goliath. Saul slew thousands, but David ten thousands. David was the great warrior general. David was the singer of Psalms. David was the uniter of

two kingdoms. David was the king of Israel. Throughout the stages of his life, David earned fame and titles. Tony Campolo tells a story about his pastor, the shepherd of a predominantly African-American church in the Philadelphia area. Preaching to the faithful, he told them one day they were going to die. Some preacher was going to say fancy words over them, and then they would be taken out to the cemetery and planted in the ground, and then everybody would go home and eat potato salad. “When your time comes,” he asked, “would you rather have a title or a testimony?” All of David’s titles were trumped by his testimony (found in 1 Samuel 13:14). David was “a man after God’s own heart.” Ask the group to silently consider these questions.

Questions

- Ultimately, what is of greater importance, your titles or your testimony?
- If you were to die tomorrow, what would your testimony be?
- Could it be said of you that you were a person after God’s own heart?

Close with prayer, challenging the learners to seek the heart of God in all stages of their lives.

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TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY GOLIATHS

Some of the “Goliaths” that we as individuals and we as the church face are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.





DANCING BEFORE THE LORD

In the space provided, write a sentence or two, about the last time you really worshiped—the last time you “danced before God.”

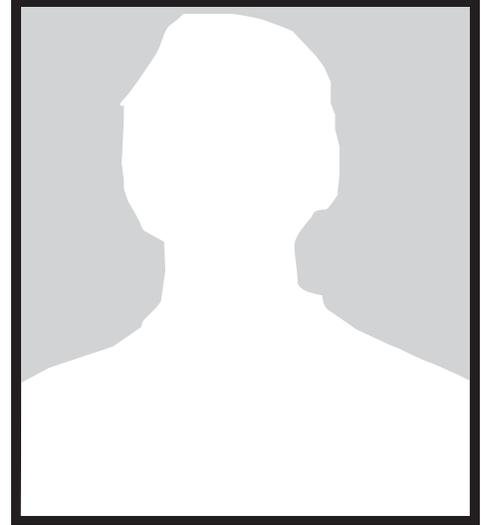
In the space provided, write a sentence or two, about the last time you really worshiped—the last time you “danced before God.”

In the space provided, write a sentence or two, about the last time you really worshiped—the last time you “danced before God.”



STANDING OBITS

NAME:



DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:

SURVIVORS:

EDUCATIONAL/VOCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:

THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED FOR:

