

Res · o · lute

(adj.) Admirably purposeful, determined, and unwavering

DEVELOPING "EVEN IF" FAITH

Lesson 3: Self Study Pages

In last week's Self Study Pages we looked at the events which led up to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's "even if" moment. This week we're going to look at some events which led up to David's "even if" moments. So here we go!

Day 1

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

Today's lesson is going to start with what we see in verse 7 of the passage we just read:

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV)

God *does not* look at the things people look at. Period. Let's think about that for a second. I've been reading through the Gospels over the past couple months, and this truth rings loud and clear all throughout them. It's such an overarching principle throughout the Word of God, that I feel it pounding in my heart right now.

God's value system is completely different from ours. We value outward appearances, wealth, titles, numbers, prestige, talent, etc. It's a value system which is so deeply ingrained within us that in order to step outside of it we will need to make a conscious decision to do so every single day of our lives. And it is *only* God working within us which can ever truly overturn our way of thinking. It's not that God doesn't *use* the things we value (he can use our wealth, our titles, our talents, etc.); however, he does not *value* any person according to those things. God values one thing and one thing only: the condition of the heart.

This is what God said about David a few chapters earlier when God told King Saul he would not continue as king because his heart had turned away from the Lord:

But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command." (1 Samuel 13:14, NIV)

This is what qualified David to become king. It was that simple. The condition of David's heart qualified him to become a king. And that should bring us all so much joy and hope!

There are absolutely no limits to what God can use us to do if our hearts are submitted to him and seeking him.

But since this is the case, the opposite is also true. The Bible talks over and over again about our thoughts, our words, and our actions coming from the heart. And God says that nothing we do matters to him if it doesn't come from the heart:

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. (Isaiah 29:13, NIV)

Jesus references this Scripture in the New Testament, and this truth is found all throughout the Bible. That's why when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

So let's see what we can learn from David about keeping our hearts pure! As we learned in this week's Group Session, David poured out his heart to God and stayed in constant communication with God. But there's something else David did in addition. Over and over again, David invited God to search his heart. And when David messed up, he repented with all his heart (Psalm 32 & 51). Here are a few Scriptures which are visual word pictures of David opening his heart up to God:

Psalm 19:12-14 _____

Psalm 26:2 _____

Psalm 51:10 _____

Psalm 139:23-24 _____

Let's learn from David's example and pray these things over our own heart!

We're going to end today's lesson with one last point. Solomon wrote,

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. (Proverbs 4:23, NIV)

There's an urgency in that verse - and for good reason. But remember, God is so good and loving, and we don't have to do anything without him. We've looked extensively at this passage during this study, and we're going to end with it again today:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, **will guard your hearts** and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV)

When we take everything to God, HE will guard our heart! God's peace guards our heart.

Thank you Lord! Help us to open up our hearts to you and teach us to value what you value.

Day 2

Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23 & 17:1-24.

*SIDE NOTE: In 1 Samuel 16:14, we read the words, "Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him." This does not mean that God works with or sends evil spirits. It means that God allowed this evil spirit to torment Saul because Saul had turned away from the Lord. But God used the one who had just been anointed as future king to comfort the one who had turned away from him! God sent David to Saul. Even though Saul had turned away from him, God still loved Saul and desired Saul to know him.

Okay, we have one main point today, and it is this: **God will get us where he wants us.**

Trust in the Lord **with all your heart** and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV)

**Our job is to trust and submit to God with all our heart,
and God's job is to direct our path.**

God had sent Samuel to anoint David as the next king, and what did David do next? He went back to tending sheep. David went back to doing what he knew to do and waited on God to do the rest.

And God did.

God used David's ability to play the harp (some translations call it a *lyre*) to get him to the palace; and God used the delivery of a lunch to get him to the battlefield!

David's hours with the sheep provided him the opportunity to learn to play the harp. David must have had a desire to learn to play the harp and write songs to the Lord, otherwise he wouldn't have used his time to do so. And that's one of the awesome things about God. When our hearts are seeking and submitted to him, God will place desires within us in order to fulfill those desires to accomplish his purposes! Look at this passage written by David:

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:3-4, NIV)

David wrote this because he lived this. No effort of our own can fulfill our desires. No effort of our own can fulfill our destinies. Only God can fulfill our desires, and only God can fulfill our destinies. What peace that brings! What are your feelings as you think on this truth:

And God often does it in ways we would never see coming. David had no idea his desire to play the harp would eventually give him an open door to the palace. David had no idea his desire to write songs to the Lord would be used to minister to people thousands of years later! Furthermore, David had no idea that his obedience in delivering a lunch would be the catalyst moment in the process to his purpose. God's ways are higher than ours, and he works in ways we could never imagine.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9, NIV)

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, (Ephesians 3:20, NIV)

It was not a coincidence that David arrived at the battlefield with his brothers' lunch just as the army was going out to its daily battle position (17:20) and just as Goliath was about to shout his daily taunt (17:23).

God designs and interlocks the puzzle pieces of our lives to create a beautiful picture which only he knows.

Our job is not to design the puzzle, our job is to allow him to put it together. Our job is not to seek our destiny, our job is to seek our God.

And our God will lead us to our destiny.

Day 3

Read 1 Samuel 17:25-58

This was David's first "even if" moment recorded in Scripture. David's "even if" thoughts could have gone something like this:

Even if my brothers ridicule me, I will not listen to their voices.

Even if I am weaker than this enemy, and even if my weapon is smaller, my God will give me the victory because the battle lines are drawn against him.

Because David kept in constant communication with God, and therefore his focus was always on God, his faith remained strong. He didn't listen to the wrong voices, and he was well aware that the battle was not his own.

1. David didn't listen to the wrong voices.

When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle." (1 Samuel 17:28, NIV)

Our first reaction is probably to be surprised at David's brother's cruelty. But remember, we read in 1 Samuel 16 that Samuel anointed David in front of his brothers (verse 13) after they had each been rejected one-by-one. So what we see playing out at the battlefield likely started in Eliab's heart long before that moment.

Eliab's heart is what had disqualified him for kingship, and we see the fruit of it in his statement to David. First we see Eliab attempt to demean David, and then we see him form an accusation against David's character. *SIDE NOTE: Remember, our enemy is "the accuser," and this is obviously the accuser at work to attempt to steal, kill, and destroy David's resolve!

What I find very interesting about this accusation is that it is against the very thing God had validated David for. How many times does the enemy attempt to bring accusations (often in our own heads!) against the very things God commends us for! For example: for me, because I long for there to be fruitfulness from what God calls me to do, the accusations often sound a little something like this:

Who do you think you are to ask people to listen to what you have to say? The way you write is not relevant. There will be no fruit from your labor. Your heart is in the wrong place because you desire many people to be reached.

Take a second and identify some of the accusations the enemy uses against you. Then, next to those statements, write Scriptures and truths to combat his lies:

You see, David was confident in his God, and he was confident in who he was through God. Yet, his brother said, “I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is.” What if David had stopped at that moment and thought to himself, “am I conceited? Who am I to think I could ever defeat this giant. God would probably choose to use someone much more _____ (fill in the blank for yourself) than me to accomplish this purpose.”

But he didn't. We know he didn't because he turned immediately to ask someone else. So how was David so strong in knowing who he was that these statements had no effect on him?

Once again, he was in constant communication with God. David knew his heart was right because he continually gave God access to it!

Not only did David's brother's words not deter David with doubt, they also didn't deter him with a reaction of hurt and anger. When our heart is close to God's heart, it is much easier for us to see people through his eyes. David might have been able to let these words fall on deaf ears because he could see past his brother's harsh exterior and feel compassion for his heart. When the Bible tells us first to love the Lord our God with all our heart and secondly to love our neighbor, it is because the love of God within our heart is what *enables* us to love our neighbor!

Another reason David might have been able to let his brother's words fall on deaf ears is because he was focused on his mission. When we begin to experience the adventure of doing life alongside Jesus Christ, our focus becomes more and more fixed on him. Our God and his mission becomes everything to us, and the things which might have once deterred us, no longer hold much weight.

2. David knew the battle was God's.

Whereas everyone else in this scene *reacted* out of their fear, David *acted* out of his faith. David understood that the battle was spiritual, and David waged war.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4, NIV)

David went on the offensive against Goliath. He waged war.

**We don't always have to live on the defensive against the enemy in our lives,
we can go on the offense and wage war!**

We can go on the offensive. And we *should* go on the offensive. Our weapons (prayer, worship, and the Word of God) have *divine* power to demolish strongholds. They have *divine* power to overcome the enemy.

David was well aware that this battle was against God and therefore God would win it. He was well aware that he was simply a vessel through which God would do it. It didn't really matter what weapon David used against Goliath, God was going to turn whatever weapon David had into a *divine* weapon.

And that's going to bring us to our last point in today's lesson. King Saul tried to have David wear his armor and use his sword, but David didn't feel comfortable in them (verses 38-40). That's when David took his staff and the stones and went to war.

David was probably a talented slingshotter, but his talent was still no match for an enemy the size of Goliath. There was nothing magical about the stone which killed Goliath. But that stone, in the hands of God, became a divine weapon which demolished a stronghold! God combined David's talent and faith with HIS power and took down the giant. And he'll do the same for us! This takes us all the way back to this week's first At-Home lesson about the things we value on earth. The things we value, without God, can produce no spiritual fruit. They're meaningless. However, WITH God, through faith and a heart submitted to God, those very same things can wage war against giants and save a nation!