



David

A narrative about what it looks like to be a person after God's heart.

THE BIBLE

1st Samuel 15:35, 16-19, 24-31
2nd Samuel 1-2, 5, 11-12

Prepare for the Story

ICEBREAKER

Our culture uses a popular phrase: "Never judge a book by its cover." What does this phrase mean? Share about a time when you have experienced this in your life.

Rewind the Story

Can someone highlight what has happened in the story so far ...

- Judges – When Israel had no King
- Ruth – A story of redemption
- The First King – Saul

Hear the Story

Scene One: Israel's Future King

Israel demanded a king, and God directed Samuel to make Saul the first king of Israel, but Saul rejected God and His ways. So, God rejected Saul as king and gave Samuel the task of finding another king for Israel. He told Samuel to go to Bethlehem and find a man named Jesse.

God also reminded Samuel that He doesn't make decisions the way that people do. He doesn't look at the outside; instead, He looks at the inside of a person.

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, he met Jesse's sons one by one. But the LORD had not chosen any of them. So, Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons and learned that there was still the youngest brother who was out in the fields with the sheep. Samuel sent for him, and when he saw Jesse's youngest son, David, the LORD revealed that he was the chosen one, the next king of Israel. So Samuel anointed him, and from that day on, the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David.

Scene Two: A Giant Task

After this, there was a day when the Philistines and Israel were preparing for war, each on a hill with a valley between them; a giant emerged from the Philistine troops. He stood 10 feet tall and wore bronze armor that weighed 126 pounds. His weapons were enormous by normal standards. The top of his spear weighed 15 pounds alone. His name was Goliath, and he began to mock and challenge Israel, saying, *"Do we need a whole army to settle this? Send out your best warrior. He and I will do battle, and whoever wins will not only claim victory but the opposing army as slaves."*

The Israelites were terrified. No one dared accept his challenge. Who could fight against such a man? Who could stand a chance? Day after day, Goliath issued his challenge with no takers. This went on for 40 days.

David's brothers were in the army, but David was too young, so he spent half his time tending to his father's flock and the rest of the time helping Saul's army. One day David was sent by his father to Israel's camp to bring food and to check on his brothers. While he was there, he heard and saw Goliath issue his challenge again. David looked around and saw no one willing to accept the challenge. He overheard some of the men talking about the reward that Saul had promised to anyone who fought the giant. Anyone who fought Goliath, they would get to marry the king's daughter, and his family would no longer have to pay taxes.

David couldn't believe his ears, so he had the men repeat what they had said, and because he was asking questions about the reward, word was sent to Saul, and so Saul sent for David.

When David came to see Saul, he told the king, *"Don't be scared; I'll take care of Goliath."* Shocked at his appearance, Saul said, *"But you're merely a boy! Goliath has been killing men since before you were even born."* But David shared how he had killed lions and bears who had tried to attack his father's flock. *"God saved me then. He will save me now,"* David said.

Saul didn't want to let David fight the giant, but there was no one else who would accept the challenge, so he gave in. Saul wanted David to be ready and properly prepared for the fight, so he gave David his royal armor to wear. But David found it heavy and too hard to move in. Instead, he chose to go to battle with what he had on. This meant he would not wear any armor. He then chose five smooth stones, took his sling and his shepherd's staff, and headed to confront Goliath.

Scene Three: How Giants Fall

When Goliath saw him, he laughed. He said, *"You send a boy with a stick? What am I, a dog? Come here, boy; I'll feed your body to the vultures and the wild animals."* David responded, *"It is your body they will feast upon; you may use weapons and have battle experience, but I have God on my side. And He will deliver you into my hands. Today the LORD will conquer you, and when you're dead, the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!"*

With that, David took off running toward Goliath. He took one of the stones and put it in his sling. He then fired it at Goliath. The stone struck and was embedded in Goliath's head; he toppled over. David moved quickly to the giant, removed Goliath's sword, and chopped off his head. With that, the shepherd boy defeated the giant, and everyone knew it was because God was with him.

After the defeat of Goliath, Saul kept David with him. Saul sent him on missions against the Philistines, and David found continued success because God was with him. With his success, David was promoted.

His notoriety grew, and the people began to praise David. Hearing the people praise David made Saul jealous. He grew suspicious of David and constantly kept an eye on him. On a few occasions, Saul even tried to have David killed.

Scene Four: On the Run

Because of the danger, David went into hiding. Word spread, and men came from all over to join him, 400 men in total. These men were loyal to David and would flee with him when Saul came close to discovering David's hiding places. The men also fought with David as they attacked the Philistines to defend Israel.

One time David and his men were hiding in a cave, and Saul entered it to relieve himself, totally unaware that David and his men were hiding there. David had the opportunity to kill Saul but refused to because God had chosen Saul to be king, and he wouldn't raise his hand against God's anointed one.

David and his men continued to stay on the run from Saul, attacking the Philistines when they could and doing their best to protect Israel. This went on for eight long years; during this time, the prophet Samuel died, and God established a new prophet, whose name was Nathan.

Saul and his army continued fighting the Philistines, but they did not fair well in one battle. The Philistines had overrun them, and Saul was critically wounded. Instead of letting the Philistines kill him, Saul asked his sword-bearer to finish him off. The sword bearer would not, so Saul took the sword and fell on it. This ended the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel.

Scene Four: David Becomes King

After Saul's death, David was anointed king even though many supporters of Saul challenged his kingship. After the dust settled, as king, David continued to wage war on the Philistines. His popularity grew with each victory. Through the prophet Nathan, God promised that David's name would be great and that his son would succeed him and build a temple for God.

David's military victories continued, and God was with him through all of them. During one battle, David sent the army, but he decided to stay home. One night as he looked out his window, he saw a woman named Bathsheba bathing. Her beauty caught his eye, and he was desperate to be with her.

He asked who she was and found out that she was the wife of Uriah, one of the men in his army. His desire was so great that he sent for her, requesting that she join him for the evening. They ended up sleeping together, and later Bathsheba sent word to David that she was pregnant.

When David heard this, he knew that this would not look good for him politically, so he sent a message to the army to have Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, come home from the fighting. David thought that if Uriah slept with his wife, then David could avoid the truth of him being the child's father. So, David tried to get Uriah to go home to Bathsheba, but Uriah refused, saying that his fellow soldiers were sleeping in tents, and he wouldn't feel right having extra comforts.

Because he could not get him to go home, David sent Uriah back to the battle with a message for the commander. David sent instructions to put Uriah on the front line to ensure he would be killed. After Uriah's death, David took Bathsheba into his home and made her his wife. David did great evil in all of this, and the LORD was very displeased with what he had done.

Before long, David was confronted about his sin by the prophet Nathan. And David, being a man after God's heart, quickly confessed and was ready to accept the consequences of his sin. Nathan said, *"The LORD has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin. But you have given the enemies of the LORD great opportunity to despise and blaspheme Him, so your child will not live."* This broke David's heart because he knew he was responsible for his son's death and many other deaths. After the child died, David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and they became pregnant with another son. His name was Solomon. And this brought the LORD great joy.

Retell the Story

- Who was the final judge, and who did he make the first king of Israel?
- Samuel is told to anoint another; how does this happen? Who is anointed?
- Israel is warring with the Philistines; who issues a challenge? What was it?
- What promise does Saul make to whoever will fight Goliath?
- How does David vs. Goliath play out?
- What does David gain? What does Saul become?
- What does Saul do to David? What does David do to Saul?
- What happens with David and Bathsheba?

- How does David respond to being confronted?
- What was the punishment?
- How does the story end?

Discuss the Story

- What is your first reaction to this story? How did this story make you feel?
- What stood out to you from this story? What did you notice for the first time?
- What from this story made you wonder?
- How did Saul and the army react to Goliath's challenge? How did David respond? Are the differences in their responses significant?
- What was the reason for David's popularity and Saul's jealousy?
- What contrasts do you see in this story between the character of Israel's first king (Saul) and its second (David)?
- What do you think caused king David, a man after God's heart, to commit such great sins concerning Uriah and his wife, Bathsheba?
- Do you think God responded to David's sin more or less harshly than Saul's? Why?
- After David and Bathsheba's first son died, they had another son named Solomon. Why do you think God was pleased with this? What might this tell you about God?

- Did you hear anything that reminded you of *other* stories?
- From this story, what did you notice about humans?
- What do you notice from this story about God's character or qualities?

Join the Story

1) DEFENDING GOD'S HONOR

David's gutsy move took the giant's challenge without warriors' weapons, but the confrontation wasn't about military skill; it was about God's honor. What are some ways you can be like David and defend God's honor on a daily basis?

2) DAVID'S STRATEGY

On multiple occasions, David could have taken Saul out by force and taken his rightful place on Israel's throne. Instead, David honored God and His anointed one. What does David's strategy tell us about the principle of God's Kingdom and how God operates?

3) SIN AND FOLLOWING GOD'S HEART

David's sin with Bathsheba had far-reaching consequences. David was a man after God's heart and still fell into sin. What causes Christians (which means little Christ's or, more practically it is the followers of God's heart) to choose sin even though they know what is right?

God,

We desire to be people after Your own heart. We want to live in a way that is pleasing to You. When we sin against You, we want to acknowledge it quickly with no excuse and waste no time returning back to You. We know that You look at the heart and not a person's exterior. It's our greatest desire that we would guard our hearts and walk in integrity with You. Help us remain rooted and grounded in Your love so we may live in obedience and honor You.