



Shaped to Serve

Sunday, January 8, 2017

David: The Flawed and Beloved King

Some Background

The stories of David are among the most well-known in the Old Testament. They occupy almost half of Psalms, plus large portions of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 1 Chronicles. David's defeat of the giant Philistine warrior Goliath is told in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. It pops up in modern culture whenever an underdog prevails over the presumed victor.

The Bible tells the complete story of David from his boyhood life as a shepherd through his rise to king and ultimately to his deathbed. David was—and is—an important figure to the people of Israel, but David wasn't perfect. Biblical authors presented a full picture of David as a complex man who was full of flaws and experienced as much tragedy as triumph. Like many others God chose, David was anointed at an early age to become the next king of Israel. He enjoyed a favorable relationship with Jonathan, King Saul's son. As king, David presided over numerous military victories and was considered a huge success. But David was not so successful in his personal life. After getting caught in an adulterous affair with Bathsheba, he orchestrated the death of Bathsheba's husband. As a result, David and Bathsheba lost their son who was conceived during the affair. Through all his successes and failures, David remained grounded in his faithfulness to God.

Youth Mindset: Most students are still working hard to fit in with friends, teammates, and even within a family setting. They compare themselves to peers and are very aware of their shortcomings and failures as friends, athletes, students, and family members. As your group talks about David, emphasize the fact that David wasn't perfect, but God used him anyway. God wants us to be who we are, even though nobody is perfect.

Teacher Homework: Read some key passages about the life of David: 1 Samuel 16, 18, 20 / 2 Samuel 2, 5, 11 / 1 Kings 2:1-9.

Opening Activity

David and Goliath is probably one of the most well-known stories of the Bible. In a battle with Goliath, God works through David to prevail against the giant. Set up a target and divide up the group. Pass out rubber bands, tape, and craft sticks to each group. Give them two minutes to make a slingshot with the provided materials. Have each group compete to see who can hit the target with a cotton ball. Following the contest, ask students what they remember about the story of David. Remind them that there is more to David than a slingshot and a stone.

Watch the Video

Show the video: “David: The Flawed and Beloved King.”

- What did you learn about David that you didn’t know before the video?
- What kind of person was David when he was a boy? When he was a young man? When he was king?
- How would you describe David’s relationship with God?

I So Hate Consequences

Tell the group that they have been accused of breaking a rule or law (not doing homework, breaking curfew, denting the neighbors car). Have each group pretend they are guilty and come up with a lie to cover it up a different broken rule. Ask each group to share their cover-up. Continue asking questions until the lie starts to unravel. Where were you? What happened? Why did your best friend say you were there? Following this activity, revisit the story of David and Bathsheba from 2 Samuel 11:1-12:24. Who suffers most from David’s abuse of power? How effective is lying in covering up bad choices?

Closing Ritual

Have each group locate the Psalms in the Bible. Of the 150 Psalms, 73 are attributed to King David. This flawed but called person was more than a warrior, but also a poet. Read together Psalm 139. Encourage students to remember that it was David’s devotion to God that allowed him to take his place as Israel’s beloved king. As students leave, give each of them a smooth stone to remind them of young David’s unlikely victory over Goliath.

Take-Home Question

David, like many sports idols, artists, and celebrities, was beloved and flawed. Share about one of your heroes. What makes them a hero to you? What flaws does this person have? How have they overcome mistakes in a positive way? What might you take away from this person's example?