

DAVID

THROUGH OTHER'S EYES



JOSHUA WELCH

David
Through Others' Eyes



By
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Introduction

People can often be guilty of two extremes when it comes to our reputation. The first extreme is the flaw of not being concerned at all about what others might think of our words or actions. This mentality can endanger our reputation when we speak and act thoughtlessly, tactlessly and recklessly. Paul once wrote to Timothy, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12). In other words, Timothy needed to behave in such a way it positively impacted his reputation in his sphere of influence. Otherwise, he would be despised. Likewise, we also must be concerned enough about our reputation we consider how others might view our actions.

Yet, the opposite extreme may occur when we are too concerned about what others think. We can be guilty of licking our index finger, sticking it into the wind, and checking to see which direction the winds of culture and society are blowing before we take a stand for God. This type of pressure to conform is exactly what Paul warned the Christians in Rome (a very diverse city) to avoid. He wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1–2). Caving to society’s pressure to conform might hinder us from being the fearless, bold, and courageous people God calls us to be (see 2 Timothy 1:7). Sometimes we must buck what is socially acceptable and politically correct.

There needs to be a balance between these two opposites. On the one hand, we cannot act carelessly knowing our reputation will affect our influence. On the other hand, we also cannot be so concerned we freeze and act cowardly knowing God sometimes calls us to be non-conformists to the philosophies of a dark world.

Perhaps no one knows the importance of a reputation more so than those who are constantly in the public eye. While no man is an island, there are some who feel suffocated by the metropolis. Imagine how King David must

have felt going from a lonely shepherd in a field with sheep to sitting on the throne of God's special nation where the eyes of both his own nation and the surrounding nations were constantly upon him. There were times when David acted carelessly and should have thought more about how his actions would affect his reputation in the eyes of his family, his nation, among his political enemies, and with God. Yet, there were other times he acted rightly in ignoring what others thought to do God's will regardless of how it was perceived.

We can learn from King David. We all face pressures from nation, community, family, and foes. We make daily choices in handling these expectations which impact our reputation. In this study, we want to look at *the man after God's own heart* by considering how others would have viewed him and, sometimes, how he viewed others. We want to build our character through these ancient, but timeless Biblical texts. In so doing, may we all be more cautious of our influence and more capable in our discernment.

Dedication

To my three teenage children: Samuel, Zoe, and Hadassah. As the world tries to toss you in so many directions may your eyes stay firmly fixed on God who pulls you heavenward. I love you all.

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Lesson 1



God's View of David:

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Text: 1 Samuel 16

Memory Verse: But the LORD said to Samuel,
 “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature,
 because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees:
 man looks on the outward appearance,
 but the LORD looks on the heart.”

1 SAMUEL 16:7

One of the biggest mistakes we can make is judging a person based on superficial characteristics. We can disrespect a person because they are of a different color, are physically unattractive to us, or even because of their age. When we do so we may miss out on the good influence of a godly neighbor, or a future godly spouse, or even the wisdom of an aged brother or sister in Christ. Chances are, if we had lived during the time of Christ, we would have completely missed out on Him too (Isaiah 53:2)!

On the other hand, we can give too much credibility to others simply because of their family's reputation, or because they are physically attractive, or because of their wealth or eloquence. We must be careful not to be overly impressed with physical and material characteristics and learn to be more impressed with the spiritual heart of individuals. There's an old phrase: “Don't judge a book by its cover.” This phrase applies to judgments which are far more important than our next book choice. We could add: “Don't judge a preacher by his suit (or lack thereof)” or “Don't judge a date by their body or looks” or “Don't judge a church by its building.” The list could go on and on.

The nation of Israel had made the same mistake. Their first king, Saul, was tall and handsome. Yet, he was an utter failure as a leader. God rejected Him because he was too easily pulled into making decisions out of pride and the will of the people rather than out of respect for God's will. So, a new

king for the future is selected, David, and the first lesson God wants to teach Israel about their new king is a lesson in what really matters. *It is not nearly as important how other men view a person as in how God views us.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about the text just prior to David being “anointed” as the next king. How had Saul, the first king of Israel, failed God and what did God do about it (1 Samuel 15:1—16:3)?
2. When Saul was anointed, what seems to be one of the primary qualifications the people had in mind as he was chosen (1 Samuel 9:1–2; 10:23–24)? Once Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, at Jesse’s house, who did he assume would be anointed as the next king and upon what similar basis did Samuel make this assumption (1 Samuel 16:4–7)?
3. Rather than physical characteristics or military prowess, what was God looking at when He selected David (see 1 Samuel 13:13–14)? What is said about David’s heart in the following passages (Acts 13:22; Hebrews 11:32, 39)?
4. Read the following passages and, in a word or two, write down what they indicate about David’s heart ...

1 Samuel 17:45–47, 52–53

Psalms 33:16–18

1 Samuel 24:4–7; 26:8–10

2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51:1–4, 17

5. Below, write out Proverbs 21:2. What does God “test” according to Jeremiah 17:10? What condition can our “heart” be in? Was David’s “heart” always perfect? How can our hearts be changed (Ezekiel 18:31; Acts 15:8–9; James 4:7–10)?

KEY LESSONS

- Men may look on the physical person; God looks at our hearts! We need to focus more on inner, spiritual qualities than outer, physical appearances.
- Saul and David both sinned. The difference in the two men is a good heart confesses and repents instead of making excuses.
- God can only change your heart if you draw near to Him!

Lesson 2



A Giant's View of David: DESPISING DAVID'S YOUTH

Text: 1 Samuel 17

Memory Verse: *Then David said to the Philistine,*

*"You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin,
but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts,
the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.*

—[1 Samuel 17:45]—

The account of David and Goliath is a familiar one to many people. We have heard this Biblical narrative used as an analogy not only in terms of our spiritual battles but even in the sports world, the legal world, and the corporate world. Yet, today, the lessons we want to take from this inspiring account are lessons we can apply to our spiritual lives.

You see, there are times we can allow the views of others to slow us down on our spiritual track. Sometimes, these spoken or perceived views create self-doubt within us and cause us to be very hesitant to move forward and make any progress. What kind of views are we talking about?

- Ever thought to yourself,
- "I'm too young"
- "I'm not smart enough"
- "I'm not experienced enough"
- "I've done too many bad things in the past"

David's Doubters

- Eliab (1 Samuel 17:28)
- Others (1 Samuel 17:30)
- King Saul (1 Samuel 17:33)
- Goliath (1 Samuel 17:42–43)

As we think these types of thoughts to ourselves, we begin to use them as excuses to do nothing. When we allow ourselves to do nothing, we allow all of our doubters and self-doubts to claim victory over us. In the spiritual

realm, God does not want us to be people of doubt and self-defeat, but people of victory. For that reason, David and Goliath are inspiring texts. David had numerous voices in his ear telling him why he would not succeed. Yet, David allowed his faith in God to be the loudest voice of all and it moved him forward to victory!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we know about Goliath when we read his description in 1 Samuel 17:1–10? How does he make “all Israel” feel as they hear of his challenge (1 Samuel 17:11, 24)? How do you feel when you perceive someone is bigger, stronger, or smarter?
2. Why does David feel as though Goliath’s challenges are unwarranted (1 Samuel 17:26)? What is David’s response to his taunts and what does David want to do (1 Samuel 17:32)?
3. List the people who discouraged David from trying to go to battle with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:28–31, 33, 41–44). What would such a long list of doubters often do to the self-confidence of an individual?

4. Why does David have confidence he can defeat Goliath (1 Samuel 17:26, 34–37, 45–47)? Did David need Saul's armor to win the battle for God or could God use David's abilities and resources to perform this divine task (17:38–40, 48–51)? What lessons are there for us in this truth?

5. How does this change the way the doubters of David view him (17:51–52)? How does Paul tell Timothy he can change people's minds who may "despise his youth" (1 Timothy 4:12–13)?

KEY LESSONS

- We cannot allow ourselves to become depressed or discouraged by others' low opinions of us.
- Small successes can lay the groundwork for bigger ones! Live one victory at a time.
- God can use you just as you are. Be yourself!
- Be decisive for God and He can reverse the battlefield in your favor!
- David was Israel's victor over the enemy; Jesus is ours!

Lesson 3



King Saul's View of David:

A POPULAR RIVAL

Text: 1 Samuel 18–19

Memory Verse: And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

1 SAMUEL 18:7

The topic of rivalries comes up in college and pro sports all the time: North Carolina vs. Duke, Alabama vs. Auburn, Indiana vs. Purdue, Ohio State vs. Michigan (you're not even allowed to say their name). ESPN even has a “Rivalry Week.”

Rivalry is a Bible topic too. We see it in the first family in Cain and Abel. Yet, it does not stop there. It shows up again with Hagar and Sarah, is passed along to Isaac and Ishmael, then again with Jacob and Esau, then again with Rachel and Leah's childbearing contests. Unfortunately, sibling rivalry is how Joseph ends up in a pit by the hands of his jealous brothers (and thanks to Rachel and Leah there were a lot of brothers). Over and over, we find the problem in Scripture and that's just the book of Genesis!

How about in your life? Do you ever feel an unspoken or spoken sense of rivalry with a fellow athlete, another student, a co-worker, or even your own brother or sister? Does it feel like there is a constant competition where one is trying to outdo the other? Do you sometimes have feelings of anger, resentment, or jealousy when you just seem to get outplayed, outsmarted, outworked, or even out-praised? This tinge of anger is a dangerous sign in our hearts. We need to pay attention to it and deal with it, and those it affects, with spiritual sensitivity.

In the life of King Saul, we begin to see these first seeds of bitterness creep into his life after the defeat of Goliath. While you would think he would be happy since Israel's archenemy was now on the run, he was

childishly jealous. He was jealous David was getting the credit and the bulk of the glory and not himself. His thirst for ambition combined with David's success became a dangerous pair of opposing forces in his heart. It affected his view of David. We need to learn from King Saul's flawed views so we can avoid suspecting others as rivals who we should be working with as friends.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After David's victory over Goliath, list some of the positive things that begin to occur as a result (see 1 Samuel 17:51—18:7). Overall, what seems to be the reaction to this major battle victory?

2. However, what is the reaction of King Saul and what seems to trigger his jealousy (1 Samuel 18:7–9)? As David succeeds, does Saul's jealousy seem to get any better (see 1 Samuel 18:28–29)?

3. How does this “distressing spirit” within King Saul begin to turn into negative and dangerous actions in the list of passages below? What can this teach us about the various means people may use to attack us?
1 Samuel 18:9—

1 Samuel 18:10–11—

1 Samuel 18:12—

1 Samuel 18:13—

1 Samuel 18:20–21—

1 Samuel 18:24–27—

1 Samuel 19:1, 9–10—

1 Samuel 19:11, 17—

4. How might David have been tempted to react to King Saul? How are you tempted to react when a rival is unjustly suspicious or provokes you? Yet how does David act (1 Samuel 18:14–16, 30)?

5. This is not the end of Saul's obsession with David. However, it is a fitting summary of Saul's downward spiral as David's trajectory keeps growing upwards. Who, ultimately, is hurt when we are guilty of sinful jealousy and rivalry (see Galatians 5:17–21)? Rather than rivalry, what would have been a better response to David's courage and growing popularity among the people (Romans 12:15; cp. Galatians 5:22–23)?

KEY LESSONS

- If we allow a root of bitterness to grow it will become a full-grown tree!
- Enemies will arise. Keep doing what is right (see Romans 12:17–21).
- Rather than jealousy towards others' success, respond with rejoicing!