



# GPS GUIDE: OCTOBER 29, 2023 G r o w . P r a y . S t u d y .

**Sermon Series: Epic Tales**

**Sermon: David & Goliath**

**Monday - Read 1 Samuel 13:13-14, 16:4-13**

King David's name occurred over 1000 times in the Bible. His famous battle against Goliath came early in his life, although he had already received Samuel's and God's anointing to succeed the failed King Saul as Israel's monarch. The anointing story gave a strong hint that his childhood was painful. Shepherding was a lowly occupation, and his father didn't even bother to include David among his sons when he first met the prophet.

Saul just looked like a king (cf. 1 Samuel 10:23-24); so did Jesse's oldest son. Samuel thought Eliab must be God's choice as the next king. But God wanted a true king inside, not just one who looked regal. God told Samuel "Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart." In what ways do we still often judge possible leaders in any field mainly on outward show, and miss other important qualities for good or ill?

The phrase "a man after God's own heart" was in 1 Samuel 13:14, before any mention of David. But we know from David's biblical story that he was a flawed person. Scholar John Goldingay wrote, "[David] will indeed be someone who will keep a steadfast commitment to Yahweh rather than to other gods...but he will hardly be a man after God's own heart' in the sense of someone who in other respects lives the kind of life God looks for or who has a heart like God's." How can you learn from the Bible's human characters when they weren't flawless or super-human?

**Prayer:** *Lord, teach me what you taught Samuel—to value integrity and character inside me more than an impressive appearance on the outside. Let what you see in me be pleasing to you. Amen.*

**Tuesday – Read 1 Samuel 17:34-37, 45-51**

Many children learn this story about David in church. In sports or business, we often speak of a "David and Goliath" story when a "little guy" takes on an established

power. The Philistine giant, whatever his exact size (ancient manuscripts differ), was big enough to terrify King Saul and the whole Israelite army. But the story tells us that he didn't scare David. God's size mattered much more to David than his enemy's size. David's sling was probably a leather pouch with strings on each end. It was swung over the head and then the strings on one end were released, propelling the stone in the direction of the target. David, lethally accurate with no sword (verse 50), stayed away from a bigger, stronger enemy and prevailed. When you face a "giant" in your life (a problem that seems larger than you) do you feel more like Saul's army, or like David? How, if at all, does faith in God shape how you face the "giant"?

**Prayer:** *Holy God, whenever I face a giant problem, teach me how to keep my trust in you. May I allow you to work through whatever gifts you've given me to help defeat life's giants. Amen.*

### **Wednesday – Read 1 Samuel 23:10-14, 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14-15**

(If you have time, learn or review the whole terrible story as honestly told in [2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:13](#).) David frequently prays to God in his early career. Prayer disappears from his story when he begins to act in self-serving and sinful ways, starting with the Bathsheba story in 2 Samuel 11. A smug King David sent his army off to fight without him. Which spelled trouble. From his palace roof, he saw a woman bathing. David ignored her marriage to one of his trusted officers and had sex with her and she became pregnant.

Bathsheba's husband Uriah, her father Eliam, and likely her grandfather Ahithophel were all in David's trusted inner circle ([2 Samuel 11:3, 23:34, 39](#)). Taking her to satisfy his desire meant violating her, letting down three faithful friends, killing one of them, and failing his God. In your daily choices, can you tell God "Not what I want, but what you want"? How can living out God's will in even small things prepare you for bigger, tougher choices?

Once David veered off course, each bad step seemed to flow almost logically from the one before. Our biggest errors seldom spring full-blown from one huge misstep but get worse and worse as we try to avoid the results of earlier errors. Have you ever felt trapped in a set of actions that just seemed to keep getting worse? What would it have taken for David to stop the cycle and move back toward God's path? Can you do what he failed to do?

**Prayer:** *Lord God, root your principles deeply in my heart, so that I can sense when my life is going off-course before it all spirals to disaster. Amen.*

### **Thursday - Read Psalm 51**

Psalm 51 is attributed to David when the prophet Nathan confronts him about the affair with Bathsheba. Psalm 51 is heartfelt cry to God from one who has committed an unspeakable sin in the eyes of God. The particulars of the sin are not enumerated — God knows the details. One biblical scholar remarked that David sinned big and repented big, and the biblical text remembers him as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). The words of Psalm 51 are fitting for the great king of ancient Israel; they are just as fitting for worshippers in the twenty-first century. Our sins may not be

as public and blatant as David's, but we all fall short of living in the steadfast love and mercy of God. May we be as repentant as David and as willing to come to God for cleansing. Can you think of times when all you could do was rely on the grace promised to you - grace that may have let you 'begin again' by 'blotting out' your sin or by repairing your brokenness? When has God replaced your heart of stone with one of flesh? How did that make all the difference for you?

**Prayer:** *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Amen.*

### **Friday – Read 1 Chronicles 25:1, 7; 2 Chronicles 29:25-27, Ezra 3:8-11**

Eventually David makes his way back to God, but not without great suffering in his own family and in the kingdom over which he reigns. David is worthy of our admiration in many respects, but his entire story is a reminder that even the most worthy life can fall from the heights. Generations later, Israel remembered him mainly as a worship-leading musician and poet, and not by the darker chapters of his story.

David was a gifted musician. He enlisted many gifted musicians to lead Israel in worship—Chronicles said his choir included 288 skillful singers! In their singing, these Levites were proclaiming the praises of God and thereby instructing the people about God. Our choir continues this wonderful tradition—not just playing and singing but teaching us about God through songs of worship and praise. The hymns we sing in worship help us to offer our praise to God. How does music help you to worship God? When you think about some of your favorite hymns, what are the themes that bring comfort, challenge, hope, or dedication to your discipleship?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, thank you for loving imperfect me with perfect love. Thank you for gifting David, and all his successors in music ministry, and thank you for allowing me to praise you through music. Amen.*

### **Saturday – Read Matthew 12:16-23; Matthew 15:21-22; Matthew 21:6-15**

A key part of David's story was God's promise that his royal dynasty would last "forever" (cf. [2 Samuel 7:16, 1 Kings 9:3-5](#)). To human eyes that promise failed—the genetic Davidic line of kings could not continue through and after the exile in Babylon. The New Testament writers traced both Joseph and Mary's ancestry to David (cf. [Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:31-32](#)). And people repeatedly hailed Jesus as the true "Son of David," the one who could and did make God's promise come true at last. In the end, David's story was about God's grace. Like many big personalities, David did much good, yet at times failed spectacularly. But David turned back to God after every failure, and God's people remembered the good as the central story of his life and reign. Matthew reported, sadly, that the chief priests were angry when they heard children shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" in the Temple. They didn't want the "Son of David" to be a gentle king who said to love your enemies, and who gave his life rather than taking the lives of others. Do you?

**Prayer:** *Jesus, Son of David, so much in our world tugs me toward hopelessness. Renew and reinforce my ability to live in hope, in confidence that your good reign will indeed last forever. Amen.*

