

READING PLAN: DAVID

Day One

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Maybe you can relate. Everybody is lined up, anxiously awaiting the selection process. An epic game of kickball is about to start, team captains have been chosen, and everyone else is backs-to-the-wall. A name gets called as the team captain points to them. They do a “fist pull” and run to their selected team. One by one, people are assigned to a team. You’re waiting. And waiting. And waiting. You’re looking less like an asset here and more like a liability.

Two people are left. You and some girl named Eunice. It’s not looking good.

“I’ll take Eunice.”, the captain proclaims.

You’re the last one picked. Actually, you didn’t even get picked. You were all that was left. A heavy sigh comes from your future team as you make your way to join them.

Ever been here? Maybe you’re more like a team captain. I don’t know. But, all of us at one time or another have had that feeling of worthlessness - the feeling that there’s nothing really significant about you.

This week’s reading is about David. David was excellent at being a shepherd. His music and lyrics would eventually be sung and read through the ages. But, as far as serving as a king of a country, David was the Last Man Picked.

On God’s team, He’s looking for people with great hearts. He’s not looking for attractive or efficient or popular or smart. He’s looking for strong and humble leaders with soft hearts. David was this kind of guy.

How about you? How’s your heart? Is it compassionate, patient and faithful - or is it angry, selfish, or unforgiving?

“Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.”

Questions:

1. What attributes do you have that the world would consider worth having?
2. Now, do a heart check. Are there any attitudes or habits that don’t look like Jesus? Write those things down.
3. What is one attitude or habit that you could focus on this week to transform it into something more like Jesus?

Day Two

Read 1 Samuel 17:12-19

It's easy for us as Christians to get excited about doing great things for God. We see missionaries around the world impacting entire cultures for the cause of Christ. We see worship leaders and musicians using their gifts for God in passionate ways. We go on a retreat with other believers who are focusing on their relationship with God and we make "the promise" to make the changes from this point forward. We've decided to follow Jesus – no turning back. No turning back.

In those moments during the excitement and celebration of that decision, we can get swept up in the momentum of it all. Then, Monday sets in. Or perhaps it hits Wednesday. You might even make it until the weekend. At some point, though, the excitement wears off, the crowds go home, and we are back to business as usual.

Yesterday, we read how David was hand-picked by God to be the next king of Israel. Can you imagine the thrill of that moment?

But, from what we read in scripture, David wasn't immediately placed on a palanquin and whisked away to the palace. (Don't worry. I had to look up that word, too.) He went right back to doing what he always did – tending sheep. He was still the runt of the family. He was still the errand boy. He was still picked on by his older brothers.

Yet, he had a future and a hope.

David didn't go back to just tending sheep – he worked at his mundane existence with a renewed hope. He sharpened his skills. I can imagine him standing in front of his sheep, practicing his kingly speeches, and bossing his "subjects" around.

You are called. You are gifted. You have a purpose that is Kingdom-minded. You have been selected to serve God in amazing ways. So, what boring, everyday things are you doing right now that will serve you well in God's future for you? Never forget the old saying "God is always preparing us for what He's prepared us for." God is always working on us to shape us into the kind of person He can use for His purposes.

Questions:

1. What skills does a shepherd have that would also be helpful as a ruler of a nation?
2. What are some things you are required to do right now that you really just hate to do?
3. What skills are you learning right now that could serve a kingdom purpose?

Day Three

Read 1 Samuel 17:32-37; 45-51

There are certain categories of life experiences where people have anger issues.

Take driving a vehicle for instance. If I were to ask you to tell me something that makes you angry while driving a car, you could immediately list of things like people cutting you off in traffic or people not using their blinker.

How about relationships? What makes you angry in a friendship? Does lying send you over the top? How about cheating? Maybe your friends are boring and you're more of the adventurous type.

If I were to ask you about things that make you spiritually angry, what comes to mind? If you're like most people, you might have to think about that one. After all, being angry and being spiritual doesn't seem to go together. If you do think of something, it may have more to do with religious rules rather than God.

David was mad – outright angry! Goliath was spewing awful things about God and His people and it made David furious. But, it was more about how Goliath was talking smack against his God than it was about him taunting God's people. David wasn't mad because Goliath offended him – he was mad because he was offending his God.

David loved his God so much that anyone speaking against Him was going to have to pay. His love for God was a protective love. God's reputation was at stake. David was willing to fight for God's reputation.

Questions:

1. What do your friends say or do that speaks badly of God (intentionally or unintentionally)?
2. How have you defended God's honor with people? Do you think God needs to speak out in those moments? Why or why not?
3. What is one way you can bring honor to God today that shows people how much you love Him?

Day Four

Read Psalm 51:1-6

Have you ever broken something and tried to cover it up? That's more of a rhetorical question – ALL of us have done that before!

You wore your sister's top and got a stain on it. You stuff it under her bed, hoping she doesn't miss it. You get a dent in your parents' car door, so you rig something in the garage to make it look like it fell over and hit the door while parked in the garage (true story).

Everybody makes mistakes. Nobody wants to admit it.

David made some lazy choices. He got lax in his duties as king. It was in those moments of weakness that temptation came and attacked him. He made a bad judgment call and gave in to his passions.

Instead of admitting the offense, he tried to hide it. He added injury to insult. He had a man killed in fear of him finding out he cheated with his wife.

This seems over-the-top to us. But, in reality, we commit the same offense so many times in our lives. From the early days of the Garden (as in Eden), we have been trying to cover up our sins. We've been hiding from God, hoping that He somehow didn't see what we did or what we thought. We convince ourselves if nobody finds out, then it's ok.

We need to be reminded God sees EVERYTHING. He knows EVERYTHING about us – what we think, what we desire, what we do and don't do.

Here's the Good News in all this - God knows, yet still pursues us. He wants us to come clean so that He can clean us up. We will never experience the true peace of God without His healing hand on the broken parts of our lives.

Questions:

1. What things in your life do you tend to hide from God? (thoughts, attitudes, inactivity, etc)
2. What is it that we fear will happen to us if God finds out these things?
3. Think of one thing you tend to hide from God and tell him all about it in great detail. Seek His forgiveness in that thing.

Day Five

Read Psalm 51:7-17

Everybody loves a good DIY project. Ok, maybe not everybody. But Pinterest's popularity has proven that we love to take something old and make it new again. There are Pinterest boards full of restored furniture, repurposed wood walls, and art made from random items – even trash! And for those of you more mechanically inclined, there's nothing more awe-inspiring than an old car that's been fully restored.

We love happy endings. Something that's been restored reminds us that there's no such thing as too far gone. Just when you thought something was ready for the trash heap – Boom! You've now got yourself the coolest car on the block, turning heads at every turn and becoming the envy of your friends.

David's sin was pretty intense. Not that God rates sin, but the extent of David's sin paired with the cover-up and the very public office he held, had far-reaching consequences to him and to the country. If you dumped David's scandalous choices into the 21st century, David would have been done.

I'm so thankful that God doesn't treat us as we deserve! David prayed (with confidence I might add) that God would restore him – both to his position as God's child as well as his position of leader. He asked God to restore joy back to his relationship with Him. He also asked Him to put him back into a place where he would “teach sinners his ways” (v. 13)

The consequences of his sins stayed with him throughout his life. But, David found restoration in his relationship with God. He continued to serve and lead and fulfill his calling as the king.

God desires nothing more than to restore His people. A fully restored follower of God has such a tremendous testimony of salvation! That's what Christ came to offer – restoration. He died and came back to life so that you could experience a new life.

You are God's special restoration project. He wants to show you off to a world that needs restoration themselves.

Questions:

1. Think about what God has restored in you. How are you different today as a result of God's work in your life?
2. Who have you given up on? What steps could you take to bring restoration to a broken relationship?
3. Make a plan to connect with that person, either through a meeting, a phone call, or a personal letter or card.