

DAVID AND GOLIATH - A STUDY ON CHARACTER

INTRODUCTION

We may have this idea of David as some kind of special human being who was so great that God just had to use him, but it was David's character that God saw. It was what David was on the inside.

I. GOD BUILDS CHARACTER IN US

A. 1 Samuel 16:7-13 -- Outward Characteristics Not Important

1. **16:7** -- God chose a young man who had nothing impressive about him on the surface.
2. **16:11** -- David was forgotten. He was the youngest and was tending the sheep.
3. **16:12** -- the only physical description of David (ruddy, beautiful eyes, handsome).
4. God chooses nobodies and they become somebodies. God's choice of a person is contrary to human reason.

B. 1 Samuel 13:14 -- A Person After God's Heart

1. **1 Samuel 13:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."
2. A Whole Heart -- **2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV)** ⁹For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose **heart is loyal (perfect, complete, finished) to Him...**"
 - a. What is important to God is important to us. What pleases God pleases us. What God hates we hate.
 - b. When God says stop something in our life we stop it. When God says something is wrong and I want you to change, we make the change.
3. A Humble Servant's Heart -- **Psalms 78:70-71 (NKJV)** ⁷⁰He also chose David His **servant**, and took him from the **sheepfolds**; ⁷¹From following the ewes that had young He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.
 - a. **"He also chose David His servant"** - God says "I don't care about talents, wealth, position, strength, or fame! Give me a person with a good character who is willing to humble himself in service!"
 - b. **"And took him from the sheepfolds"** -- David was doing his father's will by keeping the sheep, while his brothers were out making rank in the army.
 - 1) Have you ever hung around sheep? They smell, they're stupid, they're gross.
 - 2) A servant has one great goal: to make his master (father) successful!
4. A Heart of Integrity -- **Psalms 78:72 (NKJV)** So he shepherded them according to **the integrity of his heart**, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.
 - a. "the integrity of his heart" - Synonyms: complete, whole, innocent, sound, unimpaired.
 - b. **It's what we are when nobody's looking!** Honesty to the core. Not a tinge of guile or deception. That was David. That's why God wanted him to be king over Israel.
 - 1) It's how we do our homework.

- 2) It's how we work at our jobs when the boss is away.
- 3) It's how we behave when Mom and Dad have gone out for the evening.
- 4) It's how we take care of three children when they have the chickenpox.
- 5) It's how a preacher works when there's nobody looking over his shoulder.

II. HOW DOES GOD BUILD CHARACTER IN US? (How Was David Trained?)

A. **In Solitude** -- When you keep sheep, when you live in the field, then solitude is your teacher. It's where you learn to be true to yourself and true to God.

1. If we have to always have noise, something is wrong.
2. If we can't stand to be alone with our thoughts, then when do we ever think about God, or pray thoughtfully to God?
3. If we don't take the time to think about our God and our responsibilities and our brethren and our lives, then our character is stagnating. We will be superficial people, unable to understand loyalty to God, or humble servitude, or integrity.

B. **In Obscurity** -- Faithful in the little things.

1. Unknown, unseen, unappreciated, and unapplauded. That's where God trains his best people.
2. The woman of God dealing with her little kids, in the constancy of diaper changing, laundry, shopping, training manners, putting to bed. Who sees all of this?
 - a. Character is built in obscurity where no one notices all we do.
 - b. So people without character want to break away. "Live your own life, be free!"
3. In teaching Bible classes that we prepare and nobody seems to know we're doing it. But the kids in the class know it. We can't fake it over the long haul.

C. **In Monotony** -- being faithful in the menial, insignificant, routine, regular, unexciting, uneventful daily tasks.

1. As we work day in and day out, even though the work is tedious. As we cook the meals, bathe the kids, cut the lawn, clean the house -- that's when we learn to be a man or woman of God.
2. Not when we're up front in the limelight! That's the exciting part! It's when nobody else is around, that's when we learn to be a king like David.

III. HOW UN-FAITHFUL CHARACTER RESPONDS WHEN PUT TO THE TEST

A. **I Samuel 17:10-11** - Saul was too fearful to go out.

B. **I Samuel 17:24-26** - The soldiers of Israel coveted the reward but were too fearful to go out.

C. **I Samuel 17:28-29** - Eliab was resentful of David, probably because he felt guilty about being too fearful to go out himself.

IV. HOW FAITHFUL CHARACTER RESPONDS WHEN PUT TO THE TEST

A. **1 Samuel 17:31-37** -- David and Goliath

1. Here is David standing by Saul--remember Saul, great big tall guy, scared to death, knees knocking, standing inside the tent, and here's little David saying "I'm gonna go out there and whip the giant."
2. **17:33** -- Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." (You're just a kid!)
3. **17:34-35** – But David said to Saul, “Your servant **used to keep sheep** for his father (*solitude, obscurity, monotony*). And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, **I went after him and struck him** and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him.”
 - a. What kind of fellow is this David? Where does he get this kind of courage? He was close enough to be inside that bear himself. Unbelievable! However you strike and kill a bear, he did it!
 - b. And David gave credit to the Lord who delivered him because he was walking by faith and meeting his responsibilities.
4. **17:36-37** – So David knows the Lord will be with him when he goes against the giant. And he runs out there and slings a rock and hits the giant right between the running lights! And down he goes! It's no big thing! He's been killing bears while nobody's looking!

B. Why did David fight the giant?

1. Because his God had been defied & mocked.
2. Because he was now the anointed king it was his God-given responsibility.
3. Because even his lesser responsibilities he had always taken seriously.
4. Because he trusted God to help him.

C. Having a relationship with God is not some mysterious, better felt than told, emotional experience.

1. It's spending time alone with God and learning how to have more integrity, how to be more responsible in our assignments in life!
2. David fought for those sheep! While nobody was looking! Because it was his God-given responsibility at that time! In the monotonous obscurity of his solitude, he met his responsibilities!
3. The test of my calling as a preacher is not so much how I do on Sunday--it's how I do Monday through Saturday. When nobody is checking up on me.

D. 1 Sam 17:38-54 – We know the story but it is powerful every time we read it.

CONCLUSION

David was a courageous young man who from the outside didn't look like much.

David drew near to God and developed character and integrity by meeting his responsibilities.

It's in being faithful in the little things that we prove ourselves capable for the big things.