

YOUNG DAVID'S EXAMPLE (PART 1)

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Even before we are actually introduced to David, God was looking at David's heart (1 Sam 16:7), and saw a man who was "better" than disobedient king Saul (1 Sam 15:28). God saw David as a man after His own heart (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). That is why God had decided to make him the next king of Israel (1 Sam 13:14; 15:28-29; 16:1). David's good heart was also known by men even when David was young (as with Christ in Luke 2:40-52). One of Saul's servants testified that David was "a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him (1 Sam 16:18). A study of the life of David as a young man is an encouragement to all Christians. Young people today should be like David and remember their Creator in the days of their youth (Eccl 12:1), and they need to be examples of what God intends for believers in Christ to be "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim 4:12). Even those who are long past youth will benefit by following the example of this faithful servant of the Lord.

Faithfulness and diligence

David's goodness as a young man is seen in several ways. First, David serves as an excellent example of faithfulness in his duties as a shepherd. When the rest of his family went to Samuel's sacrifice in Bethlehem (1 Sam 16:1-10), David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons (1 Sam 16:10-11; 17:12,14), remained behind keeping the sheep (1 Sam 16:11). When David was sent to take food to some of his brothers in the camp of the army, David did not neglect his responsibilities, but "left the sheep with a keeper" (1 Sam 17:20). When his sheep were in danger, David showed no fear and was diligent and faithful in protecting them. David told king Saul that he "kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear" (1 Sam 17:34-36). But David's courage and faithfulness were rooted in his faith in Jehovah. David said that the Lord had delivered him out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear (1 Sam 17:37). When David's job changed, his heart did not. He served king Saul faithfully, first as his harp player (1 Sam 16:14-23; 18:10; 19:7,9), and later as his captain (1 Sam 18:2,5,13-19,25-30; 19:4-5,8; 20:1,8,32; 22:14; 24:8-22; 25:28; 26:17-25). "And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war" (1 Sam 18:5; see also 18:14-16,30). Because of David's wise behavior, "he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants" (1 Sam 18:5). All Judah and Israel came to love David (1 Sam 18:16) and "his name was much set by" (1 Sam 18:30).

The Fifth Commandment

When Jesse told his son David to take some food to David's three oldest brothers who were with Saul encamped against the Philistines (1 Sam 17:14-18), "David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him" (1 Sam 17:20-22). Later, when Saul was pursuing David and his parents' lives were in danger, David took them to the king of Moab for safety. David went to Mizpeh of Moab,

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(continued)

“And he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold” (1 Sam 22:3-4). David serves as an excellent example of children honoring and obeying their parents, the fifth of the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:12; Prov 1:8; 6:20; 23:22; 30:17; see also Luke 2:51; Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20; Rom 1:20; 1 Tim 5:4; 2 Tim 3:2). Christians should also be faithful and diligent in all things, and this begins with our duties in the family. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col 3:17-24; see also Eph 6:5-8; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Pet 2:18).

David and Goliath

David's willingness to fight Goliath was based in his strong faith in God. David is given in Hebrews 11:32 as one of the “great cloud of witnesses” that surrounds us (Heb 12:1). David is one “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness” (Heb 11:33), and “quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Heb 11:34). This is exactly what David did *by faith* to Goliath and the Philistines in 1 Samuel 17, and to the Philistines and many others after that. David understood that God is in control of all things (Eph 1:11), and works all things together for the good of those who love Him (Rom 8:28), as God had already protected David against the lion and bear that came against the lambs he was watching (1 Sam 17:34-36). Furthermore, God had promised to defeat Israel's enemies if Israel obeyed God (Deut 7:16-24; 28:1-2,7,15,25). God had always kept this promise (Josh 6; 10-11; 23:10; 24:31; Judg 2:7; 3-4; 7-8; 11; 1 Sam 7; 11). Therefore, David did not doubt God one bit, but believed with all of his heart that God would give him the victory over Goliath. And David knew that God's ability to keep His word did not depend on the size and experience of the warrior (1 Sam 17:33ff), or the number of men, horses, or weapons available (see Psa 20:7-9; 33:16-22; 147:10-11; Prov 21:31; Is 30:1-7,15-16; 31:1-3). God is able to save by few or many (see Judg 7:2ff; 1 Sam 14:6), even by a young shepherd boy with a sling and five stones (1 Sam 17:45-47). David said, “The Lord saves not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands” (1 Sam 17:47). In 1 Samuel 17:40-48, David demonstrated a living faith (Jas 2:14-26), as he went before the giant. God rewarded David's faith and righteousness, giving him the victory over Goliath (1 Sam 17:49-54; 18:6-7). David's same faith is demonstrated again time after time after this, and God consistently blessed David with great victories over the Philistines (1 Sam 18:17-19,25-30; 19:8; 23:1-5), the Amalekites, and others (1 Sam 27:7-11; 30:1-19).