God Provides a Godly King

Memory Verses

“Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

—Psalm 51:8-10
A Shepherd Slays a Giant

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: God wins the victory through His chosen one and is due all glory and honor.

MAIN PASSAGES: 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,11-13; 17:23,26,34-37,45-51

American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan penned the broad-sweeping lyrics to “Gotta Serve Somebody,” saying everyone sits under the rule of someone or something, and he was absolutely right. No matter the decision we make, big or small, we all look somewhere to give our lives guidance. In fact, it’s safe to say that we all have a functional king in our lives. Many of us balk at the idea of an actual king sitting over us on a throne with a scepter and a crown. But when we examine our lives closely, we see that we all have something in our lives that rules us, even if it is somewhat more abstract.

What are some functional kings that can rule over our lives? How are these functional kings dangerous and destructive?
Group Time

Point 1: God’s king is measured by the Lord’s standard, not the world’s (1 Sam. 16:1,6-7,11-13).

1 The Lord said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected a king from his sons.”

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, “Certainly the Lord’s anointed one is here before him.”

Each of us has a picture in mind, a standard, of what a king is supposed to look like. They need to be good looking or athletic or intellectually inclined or skilled in some particular field. In fact, we’d prefer they have all of these visible qualities and more. Why is that? Because we are quick to judge people strictly by appearance. This outside-in approach to life is often how people measure value and success.

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.”

11 Samuel asked him, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” he answered, “but right now he’s tending the sheep.” Samuel told Jesse, “Send for him. We won’t sit down to eat until he gets here.” 12 So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy, handsome appearance.

Then the Lord said, “Anoint him, for he is the one.” 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

“How can believers evaluate someone with an inside-out approach?
Point 2: God’s king trusts in the Lord’s deliverance (1 Sam. 17:23,26,34-37).

23 While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the Philistine battle line and shouted his usual words, which David heard.

26 David spoke to the men who were standing with him: “What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

34 David answered Saul: “Your servant has been tending his father’s sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37 Then David said, “The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

For forty days, the army of the Lord, including Saul, trembled in fear under Goliath’s slander; David heard Goliath once and trembled in holy anger. His immediate desire to take action against the giant demonstrated the depth of his trust in the Lord. From David we can learn two vital components to genuine trust in the Lord’s deliverance:

1. Trusting in the Lord’s deliverance means looking back at past victories.

What are some victories you have seen God accomplish in your past? In the recent history of your group and your church?

2. Trusting in the Lord’s deliverance means taking action.

What are some ways past victories have strengthened you for present and future battles?

Voices from the Church

“We must learn to be like David and see things with the eyes of faith. We must hear things with ears tuned to the frequency of heaven.”

—Gbile Akanni and Nupanga Weanzana
Point 3: God’s king wins an improbable victory for the Lord and His people (1 Sam. 17:45-51).

45 David said to the Philistine: “You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel—you have defied him. 46 Today, the LORD will hand you over to me. Today, I’ll strike you down, remove your head, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, 47 and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD’s. He will hand you over to us.”

48 When the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown to the ground. 50 David defeated the Philistine with a sling and a stone. David overpowered the Philistine and killed him without having a sword. 51 David ran and stood over him. He grabbed the Philistine’s sword, pulled it from its sheath, and used it to kill him. Then he cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled.

David defeated the giant. So we should imitate David’s actions and attitude to overcome the “giants” in our lives, right? This is the imitation approach to application. It’s not necessarily wrong, but it is incomplete because David was still a sinner in need of a Savior, and only the Lord saves. Ultimately, the Scriptures are about this Savior, Jesus.

What are some of the dangers of applying Scripture using only an imitation approach?

David’s victory was imputed, or attributed, to his nation. And this points to what Jesus did for us. On the cross, Jesus defeated the ultimate giants of sin, death, and Satan. While we cowered in sin, He stood in our place and won the victory for us. This is the imputation approach. Believing that the final victory has already been won in Christ is what empowers us to face the giants in our lives with courage and faith.

Christ as King: To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would _______ His people and _________ all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the _________.

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My Mission

Because we have been forgiven through the power of the cross, we don’t pursue the nations in judgment but with the message of grace that all may hear the good news and be swept up into the glorious love and grace of God.

- Does your life reflect the truth that Jesus has gone before you and won the victory? Why or why not?
- What are some opportunities for your group to serve and share the message of grace with those in your community?
- How will you share the good news of your victorious King Jesus with someone who is facing a giant in his or her life?

Voices from Church History

“Christ is our fortress; patience our defence; the word of God our sword; and our victory is a candid, firm, unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ.”

—Menno Simons (c. 1492-1561)
Day 1: Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

It’s hard to blame Samuel. After all, he only fell into the same trap as Israel had before. We aren’t told what Eliab looked like, but he must have looked like a king straight out of Hollywood’s Central Casting. So when the prophet saw him, he thought surely he was God’s chosen one to replace Saul. But in that moment, Samuel made the same critical mistake Israel had made with Saul, and that Saul had made with himself: relying on worldly appearances and abilities. Saul too had looked the part of the ideal king—tall and handsome. But his rule was unraveling rapidly because he took matters into his own hands instead of relying on God.

God quickly corrected his messenger Samuel: He does not look at the externals like His people were doing; He looks at the heart (v. 7). In this we see an important axiom for how God worked throughout Scripture and how He still works today. God delights in taking those who are outwardly unspectacular but inwardly humble and reliant on Him and doing amazing things through them for His glory.

What internal qualities do you believe God looks for? How can you grow in each of these areas?

Voices from Church History

“The Lord sees and judges the heart; he has no regard to outward forms of worship, if there be no inward adoration, if no devout affection be employed therein. It is therefore a matter of infinite importance, to have the whole heart engaged steadfastly for God.”

—Isaac Watts (1674-1748)
Day 2: Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23

Verse 14 is straightforward enough to understand, but it is much more challenging to grasp. The Lord’s Spirit left Saul, and in His place God sent an evil spirit to plague the rejected king. The transaction is clear, but God’s purposes behind it are cloudy. Why did God send an evil spirit? Why not just remove His Spirit from Saul? We have two options.

First, God may have sent this evil spirit to bring Saul to repentance. Perhaps this was God’s tool to break Saul of his pride and force him to depend on his God instead. Second, God may have sent the spirit as an act of judgment against Saul, much like He hardened Pharaoh’s heart in the exodus account.

While we cannot know God’s specific purpose in sending this evil spirit, we can know our holy God’s ultimate purpose: God’s desire was, and always is, to bring glory to Himself and work all things together for the good of His people. God will never fail to bring this end to pass, even if the means might be hard for us to understand.

What are some ways God was glorified through sending this evil spirit to Saul? How has God been glorified through adversity in your life?

Day 3: Read 1 Samuel 17:1-19

So there they were: the Israelite army on one hill and the Philistine forces on another hill with a valley in between. It was a stalemate; neither army seemed inclined to leave its fortified position on the high ground to charge at its enemy. The only action either army saw was a Philistine giant named Goliath walking out into no man’s land day after day to taunt the Israelites. All the Israelites had to do was to send one warrior to face him. If that man won, the Israelites would win the battle.

We have to let this picture of the Israelites cowering in fear crystallize in our minds and hearts as we continue reading this account, because in the Israelite soldiers, we are to see ourselves. Yes, we also would have been in fear of Goliath on that day, but more important than that, we have been rendered powerless before another giant, a greater enemy—that of sin and death. Just like the Israelites, we were out of the fight, dead in our sins, sitting by helplessly, waiting for our champion to enter the fray, which He did in a manger in Bethlehem.

Why is it important to identify more with the Israelite soldiers in this passage than with David?
Day 4: Read 1 Samuel 17:20-37

While none of Israel’s soldiers could muster the courage to face Goliath, even after hearing his taunts day after day, it only took David hearing him once before he was ready to face the giant. An unlikely hero stepped forward to face the enemy of God’s people. But as we know, David would not face Goliath by himself. Sure, he was the only one Goliath saw walking into the valley to face him, but David was not the only one there. In fact, he wasn’t even the primary one there: God was.

If we read ourselves into this story as David, at this point we will be prone to identify our need to live with courage, dependent on God. And there is nothing wrong with that, but if we do, we miss the greater lesson here for us. If, instead, we see ourselves as the Israelites and David as a hero outside of ourselves, we see the beauty of the gospel. Jesus is the greater David. Jesus was the unlikely hero who stepped forward to face off against the enemy of sin and death and defeated them in the power of God. He did all this while we looked on as He fought in our place.

How might you attempt to fight in your own power instead of resting in God to fight for you? Why?

Day 5: Read 1 Samuel 17:38-58

The battle had been won. Goliath, the feared adversary, lay dead on the ground, his head severed from his body. The Philistines had looked on in horror and then turned and fled for their lives. Then, and only then, did the Israelites shout a battle cry and charge. They chased after the Philistines and slaughtered them, not to win the victory but in victory.

We cannot miss that point. If God is providing a picture of how Jesus defeated sin and death in this true account of David and Goliath, and if we are meant to relate with the Israelite army, we see, then, how we are to live today. We don’t strap on our spiritual armor and pick up our spiritual weapons to win the victory; Christ has gone before us and already secured it. Instead, like the Israelite army, we charge forward in victory, not for it. That is liberating, isn’t it? We are already victorious, more than conquerors in Christ. The battle is won, the victory is secure, the foe defeated. That is our battle cry.

What battles are you facing in which you need to remember Christ has already gone before you and won the victory?
Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

• God’s king is measured by the Lord’s standard, not the world’s (1 Sam. 16:1,6-7,11-13).

• God’s king trusts in the Lord’s deliverance (1 Sam. 17:23,26,34-37).

• God’s king wins an improbable victory for the Lord and His people (1 Sam. 17:45-51).

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

How can we use the David and Goliath account to remind one another to look to Jesus rather than ourselves for salvation and deliverance?

What are some ways we can boast in our weaknesses to point the world to our Savior from sin and death?

Notes
UNIT 10

SESSION 1

SESSION 2

SESSION 3

UNIT 11

SESSION 1

SESSION 2

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SESSION 6

UNIT 12

SESSION 1

SESSION 2

SESSION 3

SESSION 4
What followed was a series of three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon, each ruling for about forty years. In some ways, these kings provide us with examples to follow: the fierce determination of David not to stand for anyone impugning God’s character; the mercy and kindness David showed to a foe and his family; the wisdom of Solomon. But we also discover that each of these three men fell woefully short of being the king God’s people wanted and needed, each one proving God’s warnings true. Bookending God’s people crying out as one for a king at the start of this volume, by the time we finish, we encounter God’s people being divided into two kingdoms.

Our takeaway is clear: The hope of humanity does not rest in any human king or leader but is fixed solely and securely in the King of kings, Jesus Christ. But at the same time, we see that God delights in using His people despite their failings. God would fulfill His covenant with David, even though he committed adultery and murder. This reaffirmed the promises God had made to Abraham generations before. And though Solomon would succumb to polygamy and idolatry, God used him to build the temple, a place for God’s people to worship and be in relationship with God.

So consider as you study: What might God do through us?