

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
DECEMBER 02 2023

a sad end

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 29; 30; 2 Samuel 1.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 68.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Victory was in the air. The spoils of victory were everywhere. David, his mighty warriors, and their families all raised their voices in exultation. They had just defeated the pesky Amalekites, who had burned their homes in Ziklag and taken their wives and children captive. The celebration was made even more stupendous because the rescue was quite daring (1 Samuel 30). David and his men were able to destroy the Amalekites and rescue all the captives without any of them being harmed. It was a great military victory, a testament to God's protection over His people.

While they were celebrating their victory against the Amalekites, another sad saga was coming to an end. Saul, utterly routed by the Philistines, fell on his sword to avoid humiliation at the hand of his enemies (1 Samuel 31). A young Amalekite seeing this took the news to David, along with Saul's crown and armband (2 Samuel 1), claiming to have been the one who ended Saul's life.

The young man expected David to celebrate the death of his archenemy. He was deathly wrong. David was so incensed that the young alien would dare kill God's anointed that he had one of his men kill the young man on the spot. He then wept bitterly at the loss of Israel's king and his best friend, Jonathan.

David's respect for God's anointed knew no bounds, as evidenced by his lament.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the hardships and trials inherent in serving God. *(Know)*
- Feel a sense of God's presence even when we feel alone and tried. *(Feel)*
- Seek to accept God's call to love our enemies and those who do us wrong. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Unity in the Body of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 14: "The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think?

section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

From their answers you may be able to draw some lessons about delayed gratification, trust in God, and perseverance.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The Fence

"There was a little boy with a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, to hammer a nail in the back fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Then it gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it, and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed, and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say or do things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one."

(Source: https://teachnet.com/communicate/inspiration/story-the-fence/.)

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

In the illustration just shared, the father makes the compelling point that uncontrolled, untempered anger often leads to decisions that hurt others as well as ourselves. The temptation to give in to his anger must have been very powerful for David. Due to the actions of one extremely powerful person, Saul, he was forced to make his living in caves and hillsides, fending for food where he could get it, even camping among Israel's enemies. David somehow never gave place to his anger. Perhaps it was all that David had experienced at Saul's hand that taught him the patience needed to rule God's people.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- After reading the *Into the Story* Bible passage, what immediately strikes you, stops you cold, stands out?
- What did David make the men of Judah do? Why did he do this? What was he attempting to teach them?
- What did David mean by the following phrases:
  "A gazelle lies slain on your heights, Israel" (NIV)
  "Tell it not in Gath" (NIV)
  "Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and admired" (NIV)
- Was David underplaying the evil that Saul had done during his lifetime?
- What circumstances surrounded Saul's death? What did the Philistines do with Saul's body? (1 Samuel 31:7-10). Do you think David had knowledge of this when he prepared his lament?
- Do you think David felt relieved that his long nightmare was finally over?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story:

Psalm 38; Matthew 6:25-33; Isaiah 25:4.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. **Low Point.** Sometimes low moments will come into our lives, no matter how gifted, talented, and anointed we are. David experienced one of these moments when he returned to Ziklag and found his home and the homes of his men burned to the ground, and their loved ones captured and taken away by the Amalekites. Ellen White wrote: "David seemed to be cut off from every human support. All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him. Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city; his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar friends had banded against him, and threatened him even with death. In this hour of utmost extremity David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances,

looked earnestly to God for help. He 'encouraged himself in the Lord.' He reviewed his past eventful life. Wherein had the Lord ever forsaken him? His soul was refreshed in recalling the many evidences of God's favor" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 692).

2. **One Mountain. Two Battles.** In 1 Samuel 28:4 the Bible states: "The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa" (NIV). Saul prepared for the final battle of his life, though he did not know it. Many years earlier another group assembled on this same mountain range, down by a spring. "So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, 'Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.' Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The LORD said to Gideon, 'With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home' " (Judges 7:5-7, NIV). As we know, Gideon and his men routed the Philistines with God's help. But the Lord was not with Saul. The Philistines decimated his forces, and Saul committed suicide. Mount Gilboa witnessed two huge battles with two very different outcomes.
3. **Watch Your Mouth.** In his lament David cries out: "Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon" (2 Samuel 1:20, NIV). Gath and Ashkelon were major cities of the Philistines. David shuddered at the thought that these cities would now rejoice at the expense and sorrow of God's people. He was urging his people to be discrete in the way they handled this bit of news. Many times we are less than judicious with our statements, especially when they involve some juicy tidbit of information. What does David's plaintive wail say to us?
4. **Thanks for All the Help!** After defeating the Amalekites, the Bible says: "When David reached Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, 'Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies.' David sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir; to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa and Rakal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites; to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athak and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where he and his men had roamed" (1 Samuel 30:26-31, NIV). David did not forget those who had helped him. When God blessed him, he blessed others! What a servant! In spite of his flaws, David exemplified the heart of God in his actions.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Patriarchs and Prophets. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

In-Class Journal

Consider purchasing some inexpensive journals for your class, or you may ask your students to buy them. Allowing opportunities for reflective journaling is one of the best ways to change the week-to-week dynamics of your classroom. For instance, this week's topic offers several perfect opportunities for personal reflection. You might ask the students to write about an experience in their life, or in the life of a friend, when, say, a bully got his just deserts. How did they feel when they heard what happened to their nemesis? Or you might ask them to write a paragraph or two about what they'd miss most about their best friend.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Divide the class into groups of two or three. Ask each group to come up with two attributes of David, one that made him a great leader, and one that made him a great servant of God.

After a few minutes, ask the students to share their findings with the class. Then ask, How can we develop similar attributes in our lives? Close with a prayer asking God's help to make all of you better leaders for Him, but more important, better followers of Him.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The book of 1 Samuel ends with the death of Saul. How could someone who had been given so much—good looks, a royal throne, the anointing of God—go astray? His life and death are a stark reminder to us that except we abide in Christ, we can do nothing.

His demise is juxtaposed against the rise of David, God's handpicked successor to the throne. If we needed any more evidence of David's fitness for high office, he delivers it in the way in which he handles the death of Saul. God didn't tell David to hold a special ceremony or to mourn Saul's death.

Upon hearing of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths, David immediately forgot all the harm that Saul had caused him. All that consumed him was the love he had for both Saul and Jonathan, and the way in which the enemies of God would reproach His name, because they had successfully killed Israel's king.

When the glory of God supersedes everything else in our lives, we will approach the spirit that David exhibited that day in Ziklag.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 68.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 29; 30; 2 Samuel 1.
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a sad end



Photo by Lew Campbell

keytext

"Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword."

(2 Samuel 1:11, 12, NIV)

flashlight

"David seemed to be cut off from every human support. All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him. Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city; his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar friends had banded against him, and threatened him even with death. In this hour of utmost extremity David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances, looked earnestly to God for help. He 'encouraged himself in the Lord' " (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 692).

what do you think?

Which do you like better, the beginning of a long journey or the ending of one? Explain your answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you remember a particularly trying time in your life that you wished would come to an end? What did you learn from that experience?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

did you know?

Do you know the meaning of the word "lament"? To lament something is to show grief, sorrow, or regret by way of a song or poem.

INTO THE STORY

"David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

" 'A gazelle lies slain on your heights, Israel. How the mighty have fallen!

" 'Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.

" 'Mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, may no showers fall on your terraced fields. For there the shield of the mighty was despised, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.

" 'From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.

" 'Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and admired, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

" 'Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

" 'How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.

" 'How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!' "

(2 Samuel 1:17-27, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Who is the main character in this passage?

_____
_____
_____

Who is the audience that is listening to David's lament?

_____
_____
_____

What do you think is the objective of David's lament? Why does he make all the men of Judah learn the lament and share in its presentation?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Who are the minor characters in this passage? *(Circle them.)*

List three phrases or lines in the lament that are especially emotional.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What lesson(s) can you learn from this passage?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" **(Ephesians 4:1, NIV).**

"Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you" **(Job 22:21, NIV).**

"Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make your way straight before me" **(Psalm 5:8, NIV).**

"My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away" **(Psalm 38:11, NIV).**

"For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you" **(Isaiah 41:13, NIV).**

further insight

"The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 639.

"We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand."

—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 341.

Sabbath

Read Ecclesiastes 7:8.

Read and respond to the *What Do You Think?* questions in this week's lesson. Life is filled with beginnings and endings, journeys started and ended, projects begun and finished. In this week's study, David's life as a fugitive comes to an end, as does Saul's life of disobedience to God.

Do you agree with Solomon's opinion in Ecclesiastes 7:8? _____

How are Solomon's words applicable to the experience his father went through while running from Saul? _____
_____
_____

Sunday

Read 1 Samuel 30.

As you read the *Into the Story* passage and complete the *Out of the Story* study questions, keep the setting in mind. David, his men, and their families have just returned to their burned-out homes after a daring rescue from the Amalekites.

As they struggle to survey the damage to the city and their homes, an Amalekite brings news of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths. Remember, David respected Saul, and he loved Jonathan.

What do you think David felt as all of these events came together at once?
_____
_____
_____

Monday

Read 2 Samuel 1:5-15.

The news of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths devastated David and his men. How did David and his men find out about Saul's and Jonathan's deaths?
_____
_____
_____

What did David do to the Amalekite who killed Saul?
_____
_____

Why? _____
_____

What does this act tell you about David's respect for the person God chose to be king?
_____
_____
_____

Tuesday

Read 1 Samuel 27:1-4 and 29:1-7.

Read the *Flashlight* focus for this week. Ellen White is writing about one of the lowest moments in David's life. As great as David was, he was not without human flaws. As he fled from Saul, David made a pact with Achish, a Philistine commander, and hid among his people.

How did the alliance fall apart? _____
_____

Why did David put his safety and that of his people in the hands of an enemy? What does this say about his trust in God's protection?
_____
_____
_____

Wednesday

As you read this week's *Punch Lines*, focus on the promise given to us by God in each one. God's promises are always conditional upon our obedience. Choose two scriptures from the *Punch Lines* list and state below the promises God makes and the conditions we must meet to receive them.

Promise _____
_____

Condition _____
_____

Promise _____
_____

Condition _____
_____

Thursday

Read Job 22:21.

Do you know of someone at your church, school, or in your community who has been hurt or killed? What can you do to help this person and/or their loved ones during this difficult time?

Not sure what to do? Why not ask God to show you how to help, then talk with your parents, pastor, and youth leader to get ideas about what you can do.

Friday

Read Psalm 38:11.

When King David and his men returned to Ziklag—their home among the Philistines—following their broken alliance, they found the city in flames and their families taken captive.

The Amalekites were exacting revenge on David for his raids on them. David's alliance with the Philistines brought him much trouble. How did David's failure to trust God affect those around him? How do your failures to obey God affect others?
_____
_____

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 68.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.