

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
NOVEMBER18 2023

giant faith

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 16; 17.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 62 and 63.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Perhaps no Bible story has captured the imagination quite like the well-worn tale of David and Goliath. In spite of the story's familiarity, there are still insights and lessons to be gleaned from it.

Before the epic battle with Goliath we meet David as a humble shepherd. As the youngest of Jesse's boys and a resident of the small and nondescript town of Bethlehem, David represents the least likely candidate for king. But God measures greatness by a standard different from ours. We consider the outward appearance of a man while God's concern is the heart.

This lesson offers an ideal template that lends itself to a variety of discussions. For example, David's experience reminds us of the exciting rewards of recklessly trusting God. Regardless of the giants we face, ultimately God is in charge and we can trust Him. The story also illustrates God's calling. Just as God called David to a big, bold vision, so He calls each of us to be high-impact players for His kingdom. Another discussion you may wish to facilitate based on this lesson explores the topic of talents and spiritual gifts. In David's case, it wasn't that he had some supernatural ability; rather, he had availability to be used by God. Thus God used a very ordinary kid to accomplish some extraordinary things. Still another avenue down which you may wish to take this lesson looks at the issue of competition. David's story offers a different paradigm for competition and reminds us that in God's game plan the weak become strong, and those who are in last place rise to the top.

All in all, this lesson is rich with possibilities. Pray that God will guide you to shape this lesson to the specific needs of the young people in your group.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- See that God is absolutely trustworthy, in all circumstances. *(Know)*
- Experience the joy of feeling unafraid when facing giant obstacles. *(Feel)*
- Commit fully to God to be used in mighty ways to build up the kingdom of heaven. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Remnant and Its Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 13: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; . . . Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)"

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.*

Invite the students to think of other people in the Bible who demonstrated extraordinary faith. Tell them they cannot use any of the stories listed in the *What*

Do You Think? section. Break the students up into groups of three and ask each group to share one of the stories they thought of by acting it out as a charade. Let the other students then guess what story is being acted out.

After the various Bible stories have been mentioned or acted out, compile a list of adjectives that describe what all these different people (including the 10 Bible characters in the *What Do You Think?* section) share in common.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The story is told of an aging emperor. To choose his successor, he called all the young people in the kingdom and said, "I'm giving each of you a seed. Go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this seed. I will then judge the plants and choose the next emperor!"

A boy named Ling received a seed. He went home and got a pot and some planting soil. He planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he nurtured the seed. In a few weeks Ling's friends talked about their blossoming plants. Ling kept checking his seed, but nothing grew.

A year went by and all the youths of the kingdom returned to the emperor's palace with their plants. Ling arrived with only a pot of dirt.

Ling marveled at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. The kids all snickered at Ling's pot of dirt.

The emperor surveyed the room and commented, "What great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown." Then the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered Ling to the front.

The emperor explained, "One year ago I gave everyone a seed. I told you to plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds that would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the character to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he's the new emperor!"

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

In the end, character matters.

The reason David was chosen to be the king of Israel was because of his character. David's oldest brother, Eliab, was the obvious choice for king. When Samuel saw Eliab he thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD" (1 Samuel 16:6, NIV).

"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart' " (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV).

When God looks at your heart, what does He see?

Out of the Story for Teachers

The Bible tells us that "as we try to become acquainted with our heavenly Father through His word, angels will draw near, our minds will be strengthened, our characters will be elevated and refined. We shall become more like our Saviour. And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our affections go out after God. While the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His works. Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70). By spending time studying the Bible, we learn how to behave toward God and others. Jesus taught good habits of acceptance and love—He taught us how we should treat others and what we should do to develop a relationship with our heavenly Father. "The parables by which, during [Jesus'] ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature, and how He had gathered the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70).

The Bible is rich with such stories, and perhaps there is no better story for illustrating character and virtue than that of David.

- After reading the *Into the Story* section, have the students identify David's virtues (e.g., courage, faith, integrity, patience to practice delayed gratification, etc.) that emerge from the text. As they call out these traits, write them on a white/chalkboard.
- Next to the list of character qualities have students share the physical attributes (height, nice smile, happy eyes, etc.) they look for in someone they're interested in dating. Read this paraphrase

of 1 Samuel 16:7: The Lord does not look at this list (point to the list of physical attributes); man looks at this list, but the Lord looks at only this list (point to the list of David's virtues).

Other questions to facilitate discussion around the text:

- Why has the story of David and Goliath held such a strong appeal for kids?
- In light of David's calling, how do you explain other stories in the Bible (e.g., anointing Saul, calling Peter, using Rahab, etc.) when God chose people who had less-than-sterling characters?
- Look at David's story from the perspective of his spiritual gifts (for a list of the spiritual gifts see Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; and Ephesians 4:7-13). What were David's spiritual gifts? Ask the students to identify spiritual gifts they share with David and spiritual gifts they see in themselves but not in David. Invite students to affirm the gifts they recognize in one another.

Sharing Context and Background

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

There are three primary stories in this passage. The following commentary fleshes out each story:

1. **Samuel Anoints David**—The act of anointing David was a customary practice in ancient times. The anointing service set every king and high priest apart for God's service. In this story David was anointed in secret; it was not until later that he was anointed in public (2 Samuel 2:4; 5:3).
2. **David Serves as a Musician in Saul's Service**—First Samuel 16:14 records: "Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him" (NIV). Saul committed the unpardonable sin when he rejected the Spirit of God. It was not that God withdrew from Saul; but rather Saul rebelled and refused to listen to the promptings of God's Spirit. Read Psalm 139:7 and discuss this part of the story in light of our free will.

   Temporary relief came to Saul through the music of David. According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, "as Saul listened to David's music his wicked feelings of self-pity and jealousy left him for a time, only to return with double power as time went on" (vol. 2, p. 531). As Saul kept rejecting God's guidance, he became like the demon-possessed man of Christ's parable in Luke 11:24-26 in which the last condition of such a soul is considerably worse than the first state of the soul.
3. **David and Goliath**—In his book *David: A Man of Passion & Destiny* pastor and author Charles Swindoll suggests that there are four lessons that emerge from the story of David and Goliath:

   A. *Facing giants is an intimidating experience.* With the passage of time it's easy to skim David's story and forget how scary it must have been to engage in combat with that brute.

   B. *Doing battle is a lonely experience.* No

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 quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

one can fight for you. It's a lonely battle, but it enables you to grow up and trust God.

C. *Trusting God is a stabilizing experience.* David brought the giant to his knees with one stone. We don't know for sure, but we can surmise that David overcame any jitters because he was stabilized by his trust in God. If you try to win your spiritual battles in your own strength, you'll lose. But when you battle after spending sufficient time in prayer, it's amazing how stable you can be.

D. *Winning victories is a memorable experience.* As we remember the victories of the past we can march confidently with God into the future.[2]

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Allow for a quiet time of reflection to close the lesson. Ask students to write two letters. The first is a letter from God to themselves that begins with "Dear _____, Just as I had a great calling for My child David, so I am calling you to . . ." The second letter is their response to God.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Ellen White reminds us: "The education and training of the youth is an important and solemn work. The great object to be secured should be the proper development of character, that the individual may be fitted rightly to discharge the duties of the present life and to enter at last upon the future, immortal life. Eternity will reveal the manner in which the work has been performed."[3]

With that sobering perspective in mind, use the story of David to challenge and inspire young people to carefully consider character issues. Remind them that God has not changed. Just as God anointed a young person with a sterling character in ancient times, so He continues to call young people with character to impact the world today. Each student studying the story of David should ask, "Do I have the kind of character that God can use?"

[1] Lou Delfra, as quoted from www.silk.net/RelEd/storytell.htm.

[2] This list adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion & Destiny* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 48.

[3] Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 418.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Storytelling as a Teaching Technique

By studying the primary teaching method of the greatest teacher in history, Jesus Christ, it becomes clear that one of the most effective tools for high-impact teaching comes through the use of stories. Lou Delfra explains:

"Jesus' use of storytelling is not only a useful pedagogical method, but also a necessary one. That is, Jesus did not tell stories merely because they provided effective illustrations of what he was really hoping to say more plainly, if only people would better understand him—though they do often serve the useful pedagogical purpose of elucidating difficult or hard-to-grasp concepts. Rather, Jesus told stories because the 'subject matter' with which he was dealing—'The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel' (Mk 1:15)—could often only be revealed in its fullness through image and story."[1]

Because this week's lesson tells three stories, it provides a great opportunity to experiment with storytelling as a method of teaching. Not only can you retell the Bible stories (perhaps from the first-person perspective of Goliath or Eliab), but you can choose modern-day stories as well to illustrate the concepts you're trying to teach.

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*), chapters 62 and 63.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 16; 17.
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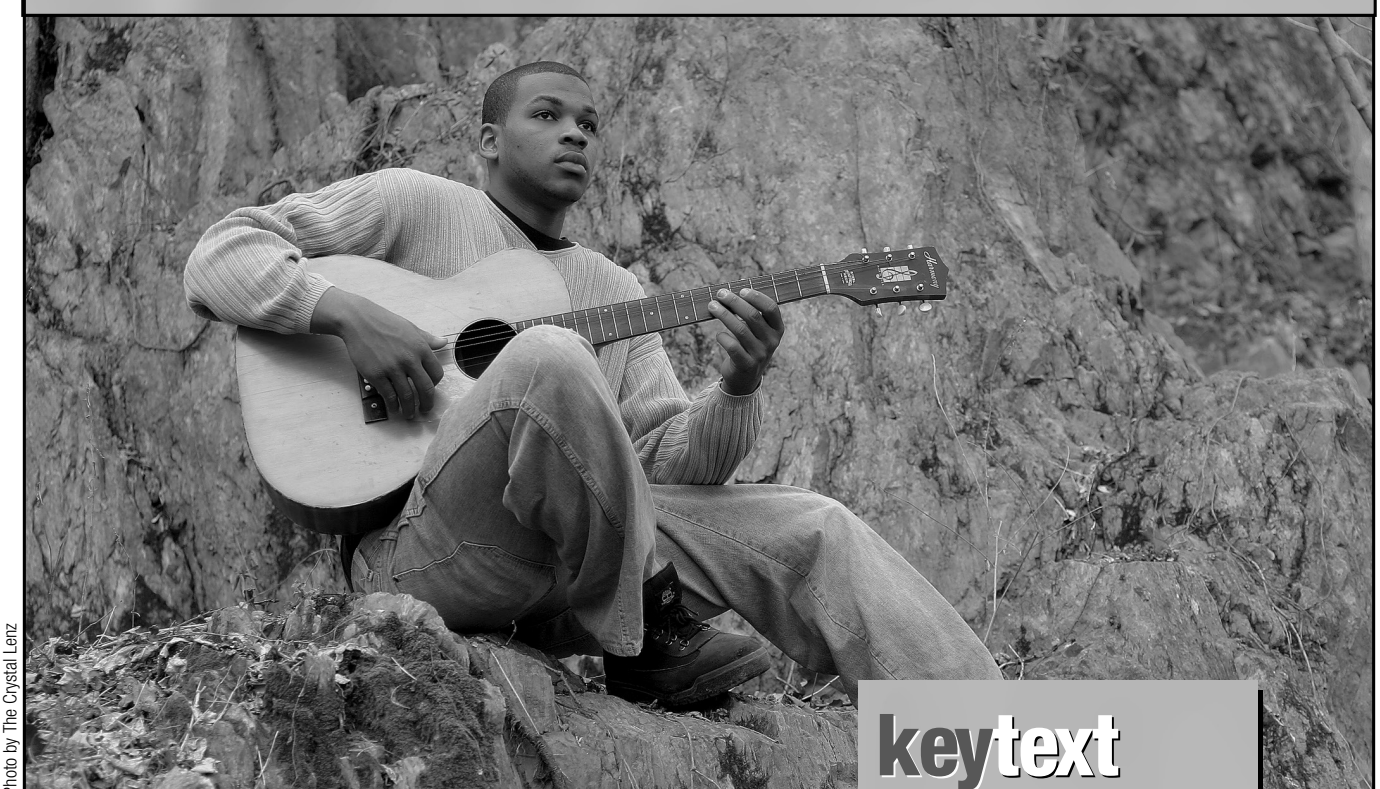


Photo by The Crystal Lenz

keytext

"David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.' "

(1 Samuel 17:45, NIV)

flashlight

"David, in the beauty and vigor of his young manhood, was preparing to take a high position with the noblest of the earth. His talents, as precious gifts from God, were employed to extol the glory of the divine Giver. . . . The love that moved him, the sorrows that beset him, the triumphs that attended him, were all themes for his active thought; and as he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart throbbed with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 642).

what do you think?

If you took a test that measured how much faith you have in God, what grade do you think you would deserve? (Circle only one grade.)

A **B** **C** **D** **F**

If your friends graded the test, what grade do you think they would give you?

A **B** **C** **D** **F**

Rank the following Bible stories in order from the person who demonstrated the greatest faith (1) to the one who showed the least faith (10).

____ Noah and the ark
____ Daniel in the lions' den
____ Peter walking on the water
____ David slaying Goliath
____ Naaman dipping seven times in the Jordan River
____ Esther approaching the king to save her people
____ Moses leading the Israelites through the Red Sea
____ Rahab hiding the Israelite spies
____ Joseph refusing to compromise with Potiphar's wife
____ Abraham offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice

did you know?

Goliath was a tall man—somewhere between 7 and 9 feet. The important thing to remember is that David with God on his side defeated Goliath and brought honor to God.

INTO THE STORY

"The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.'. . .

"Samuel did what the Lord said. . . .

" . . . Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

"When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.'

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'

. . .

"Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?'

" 'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.'

"Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'

"So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

"Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'

"So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David."

"Then [David] took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached [Goliath] the Philistine. . . .

"David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head.' . . .

"As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

"So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him."

(1 Samuel 16:1, 4-7, 10-13; 17:40, 45, 46, 48-50, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

The narrative of David and Goliath is perhaps the most well-known and beloved story in Scripture. Perhaps the timelessness of the story can be explained by the fact that it contains the essential elements of classic drama: the smaller and weaker prevails against the taller and stronger; one kid changes the destiny of nations; with God's help, a humble boy triumphs against impossible odds.

Read the entire chapter of 1 Samuel 17 and *underline* any details of the story that are new to you. What jumps out at you that you haven't noticed before? To what do you attribute the story's timeless appeal to children? What do you think is the most important point of the story? How does the story apply to your life today?

What does the story teach us about the following topics:

Competition? _____
_____
_____
_____

Purpose in life? _____
_____
_____
_____

Talents and spiritual gifts? _____
_____
_____
_____

Faith in God? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" **(Deuteronomy 31:8, NIV).**

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" **(Romans 15:4, NIV).**

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" **(Proverbs 3:5, 6, NIV).**

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength" **(Philippians 4:13, NIV).**

" 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' " **(Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).**

further insight

"It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. . . . He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146.

Sabbath

Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Share in your small group your reasons for ranking the Bible characters in the order that you did. Discuss these questions:

What other Bible stories come to mind when you think about death-defying faith?

Is there a modern-day equivalent to David? Do you know of anyone who demonstrated similar faith to the shepherd boy marching toward some giant obstacle with unflinching courage?

What would it take to build the kind of faith we read about in the Bible?

Sunday

Read 1 Samuel 16 and 17.

Read the story of David's anointing as king and his encounter with Goliath.

The main text in the story of David's anointing is verse seven: "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart' " (NIV).

The *NIV Life Application Bible* offers this commentary:

Saul was tall and handsome; he was an impressive-looking man. Samuel may have been trying to find someone who looked like Saul to be Israel's next king, but God warned him against judging by appearance alone. . . . Appearance doesn't reveal what people are really like or what their true value is.

Fortunately, God judges by faith and character, not appearances. And because only God can see on the inside, only He can accurately judge people. Most people spend hours each week maintaining their outward appearance, they should do even more to develop their inner character.[1]

From the selected verses in 1 Samuel 16 and 17 the character that has the most impressive outward appearance is clearly Goliath. Goliath appears from the camp of the Philistines as a "champion" (verse 4, NIV), using a rare Hebrew word that occurs only twice in the Hebrew Bible (1 Samuel 17:4, 23). The word translated "hero" in verse 51 is a more common Hebrew word. In the War Scroll discovered at Qumran, the word seems to mean "infantryman."

What can I do to value the true worth in others and not rely on outward appearances?

Monday

Read 1 Samuel 17:45.

Personalize the *Key Text* to carry with you as a promise this week when you battle temptation. For example, your personal translation might be something like this: "Satan, you come to me through [pornographic internet sites], but I come to you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This battle belongs to the Lord."

Tuesday

Read Romans 15:4.

Read the *Flashlight* section and then reflect on the following questions:

What is a love that moves you?

What are sorrows that beset you?

What are triumphs that attend you?

How can your answers to these questions become "themes for [your] active thought" so that your heart might throb "with more fervent adoration and gratitude" and your voice ring out in "a richer melody" so that you can live from strength to strength?

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* and pray about God's purpose in your life. What is God calling you to do?

Thursday

Read Philippians 4:13.

Think about Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah. Chances are you don't even know who they are, right? They were three of David's brothers who paraded in front of Samuel in hopes of being anointed as king. These were the same brothers who were in Saul's army and listened to Goliath's taunts for 40 days, while cowering in fear. Because they allowed their fears to paralyze them, and not one of them had the kind of heart that David possessed, they have been forgotten while David's legacy lives on.

What risk is God asking you to take? How can you swallow your fears and step out in faith in order to be like David and do something great for God?

Friday

Read Deuteronomy 31:8.

What qualities in David's heart does God want to develop in you?

[1] *NIV Life Application Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), p. 463.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 62 and 63.

**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.