

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
OCTOBER03 2026

know God, know yourself

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 17.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 27.
Key Text: 1 Samuel 17:45.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Being emotionally healthy and having an authentic spirituality are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, it is impossible to be spiritually mature and emotionally immature (Peter Scazerro, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*).

Often we hit a wall in our growth despite years of repeating the patterns of Christian disciplines, activities, and behaviors. This wall is the result of deeply rooted dysfunctional emotional habits from our past. This wall prevents us from savoring the sweet experiences of an authentically mature life in Christ.

Few of us make the time to reflect inwardly on how deeply (and subtly) outward influences affect our decisions, words, and feelings. Without this awareness of who we are and how our circumstances affect us, we are unable to tackle exposure to the pressures and forces at work against us.

We end up living someone else's life, someone else's expectations. Like a boat without oars or rudder, we are tossed and turned by every which way the winds of approval blow at us.

Only as we know ourselves and the person we are becoming through Christ's working in us are we able to transform our lives into gifts to our families, friends, and communities.

Nurturing a growing and authentic spirituality requires intentional and purposeful planning. If we do not plan, we could end up saying, as one church member did, "I was a Christian for 22 years, but instead of being a 22-year-old Christian, I was a 1-year-old Christian 22 times! I just kept doing the same things over and over again."

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand themselves better—their "new true" self. *(Know)*
- Realize that knowing the truth is only the first step; true spirituality is being able to choose to do the right, despite opposition and pressure. *(Feel)*
- Be challenged to begin the journey of relinquishing their "old false" self so that they can live authentic Christlike lives as their "new true" self. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Growing in Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 11

"By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer,

feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. We are also called to follow Christ's example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience" (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matt. 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Rom. 8:38, 39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil. 3:7-14; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18, 23; Heb. 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4).

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.*

Hold up a mirror and ask the class why we look into mirrors. (To check our hair, clothes, makeup, and so on.) Just like we regularly check to see how we look on the outside, we also need to examine ourselves on the inside.

Thankfully, God doesn't measure our worth in light of how we look on the outside. He is interested in our hearts. He values us based on our character. How can we invest in the enduring value of a character like Jesus? How can we view others through the eyes of Jesus—as His children—regardless of how they look or what they own?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In his short story "The Necklace," Guy de Maupassant tells about a young woman named Mathilde who was desperate to be accepted by high society. Her husband was a common worker but they were invited to a grand ball. Feeling that she had to make a good impression on the people at the ball, Mathilde borrowed a beautiful necklace from a wealthy friend. She was accepted by the aristocracy at the ball but the evening was far from a success because she lost the borrowed necklace!

Mathilde was too embarrassed and instead of just telling her friend, she convinced her husband to borrow 40,000 francs to replace the lost necklace.

For the next 10 years, Mathilde and her husband both worked two jobs to pay back the 40,000 francs. They ended up selling all they had and living in a slum.

One day, Mathilde ran into the friend who had loaned her the necklace. Mathilde looked so haggard from all those years of hard work and deprivation that her friend almost did not recognize her. She confessed to her friend what had happened and it was only then she found out that the original necklace had been made not with real diamonds, but with fake gemstones! It was worth less than 500 francs! Mathilde and her husband had worked so hard and suffered all those years just because Mathilde had tried to keep up appearances.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Do you ever feel that way about your spiritual life? That you're always having to keep up appearances? You know just enough of the Bible to know how much you don't know. You're enough of a Christian to know the rules, but not good enough to know the joy of living them. It sounds like you're enough of a Christian to make yourself miserable.

God doesn't want you to settle for that! He wants to take you to the next level, where the real thrill of knowing Him lies.

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.*

- *Circle* the main characters in this story.
- What is the situation that David is in here? What is happening to him?
- Share any aspects of the story that are new to you.
- David faced criticism and unrealistic expectations when he wanted to fight Goliath. What are some criticisms and unrealistic expectations you have encountered when you shared your dreams or hopes?
- How did David manage to stand firm against the

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Provide an Outline

During the last five minutes of your lesson, give your students an outline of everything that you expected them to get from your lesson. Go over the outline with the students and ask them if there are any questions they may have. Be patient. Sometimes the students are unresponsive, but if you ignore the awkward silence for a minute or two, they may speak up after a while. Alternatively, pass out pieces of paper on which they can write a question they may have. Collect the questions (but let them keep the outline) and tell the students that you will address the questions when you return next week.

powerful pressures that were trying to force him to be someone he was not?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Luke 18:14; Romans 4:5.

Sharing Context and Background

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

According to *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, when Saul rejected Samuel's inspired counsel, God called for another to be trained according to His own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). "David's training, like that of Christ, was carried on in the face of jealousy and hatred. Although David sometimes fell into transgression of the law he revered and advocated, he always humbled his heart before that law as supreme. As a result of David's cooperation with the principles laid down by God through Moses and Samuel, Israel gradually subdued all her enemies" (vol. 2, p. 449).

In 1 Samuel 17:39 David says politely, "I cannot go in these . . . because I am not used to them" (NIV). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* explains that this is evidence of both his faith in equipment that he has previously tested, crediting God with his victories even over wild animals. His faithfulness in little things (i.e., tending his father's sheep) prepared him for greater tasks (i.e., slaying Goliath). "The procedure he chose was determined by his own spiritual convictions rather than by the unsanctified judgment of others, irrespective of position. . . . David could not fight in Saul's armor—he must be himself. God designs that every man shall work in his own harness. We see a man in public life who takes well with the people, and we copy his mannerisms, hoping to find success through them. But God wants men who will be themselves, men who will learn from each day's experience what they need to know in order to solve tomorrow's problems."[1]

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary continues to elaborate that in 1 Samuel 17, David

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite 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* The Great Controversy. *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.*

scored three victories:

The first is when he rose above Eliab's taunting. He refused to be drawn into a petty exchange of verbal barbs, and showed he was in control of his emotions. Instead of retorting Eliab with an equally insulting comment, David simply asked disarmingly, "What have I done? . . . Can't I even speak?" (1 Samuel 17: 29, NIV). "Had he not learned patience with his sheep, he could not have been shown patience with his jealous brothers."[2]

The second victory was attained by staying firm in his beliefs, even in the face of opposition from an authoritative figure. "Never dreaming of the possibility of a supernatural intervention, Saul planted seeds of doubt in David's mind, and tempted him to wear the king's own armor. But again with courteous deference, David won the victory over doubt by adhering to his Heaven-inspired purpose of maintaining faith in, and total dependence on, the Lord."[3]

The final victory was the very public slaying of Goliath—the enemy that even Saul, the king who stood head and shoulders above his countrymen, was afraid of. "It was a victory of spiritual forces over material brute strength."[4]

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

If your class feels safe and comfortable enough, have them share what they wrote for Thursday's *Connecting to Life.* Allocate about a minute for this section and let each student know beforehand that they just need to pick one of the questions and read aloud what they wrote. Resist the urge to give advice or dissect their answers. Simply let them share their innermost thoughts without hearing overt or implied judgment. If you detect an alarming problem (e.g., suicidal thoughts), you can address the issue prayerfully and privately when the class is over.

Summary

Share the following story in your own words:

The sixteenth president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, was attributed with saying, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

We can try to hide who we are by conforming to the standards and acceptable behaviors that portray us to be someone we are not. However, sooner or later, the truth will come out. How we live, act, speak, and treat others will often make more of an impact on people's perception of us (and of Christ) than our words do. We don't run away from the culture we live in, but when people see us, they should see Jesus.

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[1] F. D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 538, 539.

[2] *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 2, p. 539.

[3] *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 2, p. 539.

[4] *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 2, p. 539.



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 *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 27.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 17.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy,* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 27.

know God, know yourself



Photo by Alden Ho

flashlight

"While the Christian's life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 477).

keytext

"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)

what do you think?

Read the following statements:

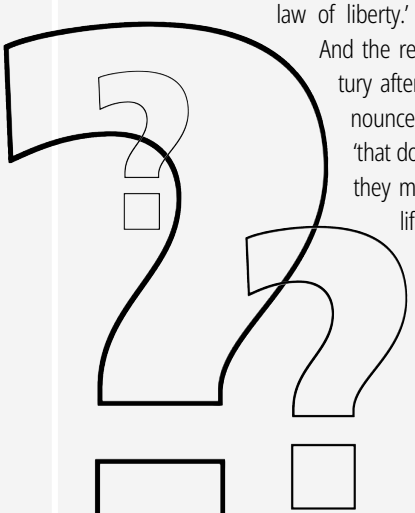
- I am unique.
- I am precious to God.
- Jesus loves me immensely.
- My worth is not found in my intelligence, wealth, or good looks, but in who I am—a child of God.
- My heavenly Father measures my value through Jesus' sacrifice to save me.

Can you relate to any of these statements?

did you know?

Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements. . . .

But not so did prophets and apostles regard the holy law of God. Said David: 'I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts.' Psalm 119:45. The apostle James, who wrote after the death of Christ, refers to the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments] as 'the royal law' and 'the perfect law of liberty.' James 2:8; 1:25. And the revelator, half a century after the crucifixion, pronounces a blessing upon them 'that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' Revelation 22:14" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 466).



INTO THE STORY

"David asked the men standing near him, 'What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?'

"They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, 'This is what will be done for the man who kills him.'

"When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, 'Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.'

"'Now what have I done?' said David. 'Can't I even speak?' He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.

"David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.'

"Saul replied, 'You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.'

"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 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 the Lord be with you.'

"Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

"'I cannot go in these,' he said to Saul, 'because I am not used to them.' So he took them off. Then he 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 the Philistine.

"Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and

handsome, and
he despised him. He
said to David, 'Am I a dog, that
you come at me with sticks?' And
the Philistine cursed David by his gods.
'Come here,' he said, 'and I'll give your flesh
to the birds and the wild animals!'

"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 17:26-45, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Using your own words, describe the objections, complaints and implied meaning behind the words that David hears from . . .

his family (verse 28)

_____
_____

Saul (the king) (verses 33, 38)

_____
_____

Goliath (the bully) (verses 41-44)

_____
_____

David was highly *differentiated*. He knew who he was and was not swayed by public opinion or the need for approval. From the passage, in what ways did David stay true to himself and not allow pressure and anxiety from others to control him?

_____
_____

In verse 45 David confidently exclaims: "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty." Why was he so confident of God's support? Find scriptural evidence to back your thoughts.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you" **(Romans 12:1, 2, *The Message*).**

"What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, 'Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well'—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?" **(James 2:14-16, NLT).**

"You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" **(Matthew 7:16, NLT).**

"Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked. . . . But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do" **(Psalm 1:1-3, NLT).**

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" **(Jeremiah 6:16, KJV).**

further insight

"By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character."—Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace,* p. 94

Sabbath

Read Ephesians 3:17-19; Luke 15:11-20; John 15:15.

Consider the statements in the *What Do You Think?* section. Which ones did you resonate with? From where (or whom) did the message(s) come?

_____

_____

As we grew up, we received many messages from our parents, our teachers, our friends; even the results of our choices are a type of message to us. These messages can be positive ("You're wanted and loved even if you failed your algebra exam") or they can be negative ("I can't come to watch your game/play again. Work is more important than my relationship with you").

What is the message God is sending you in today's reading?

_____

_____

Sunday

Read Ephesians 4:29.

Read the *Into the Story* section and complete the *Out of the Story* questions. If you were David and heard these negative messages, how would you feel? What would you feel toward those who had spoken them? In what ways are your responses similar or different from David's, and why?

_____

_____

Monday

Read 1 Samuel 17:45.

Read the *Key Text*. David exhibited a lot of confidence in God's ability to conquer the enemy. How do you think David acquired such confidence in God?

_____

_____

David was able to stay true to who he was, while still remaining close to the people important to him. He was able to choose to do what was right without being controlled by the approval or disapproval of others. Are there times when you shrink back in fear or "wear armor" that does not fit you? What kind of pressures from circumstances or forces from people influence you to do so?

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read Colossians 4:6.

Read the *Flashlight* section. Ellen White differentiates between true and false humility. Many of us cannot tell the difference between our true self and a false self we enact just to fit in. Take some time each day this week to reflect on the words you said and the choices you made. With each situation, complete this sentence: When I did/said _____. it revealed that I am _____. (For more space, use the Notes pages in the back of your Bible study guide.)

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, which verse strikes you as particularly significant today? Why do you think this verse is especially relevant to you today?

_____

_____

Thursday

Read Titus 3:1, 2.

Make time to answer the following questions:

1. What makes you angry?

_____

2. What makes you sad?

_____

3. What are you afraid of?

_____

4. What do you enjoy?

_____

5. What (or whom) do you love?

_____

6. What surprises you?

_____

7. What disgusts you?

_____

You may or may not be able to answer all the questions. You may also have more to say on one or two questions than the rest. If that happens, stay with that question for as long as you need to complete it.

Friday

Read Psalm 141:3.

Write a prayer asking God to help you know who you really are, and who you are becoming, as you know God more and more intimately.

_____

_____

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 27.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://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.