



Managing GOD's Money

Theme for the September: Life Lessons

Life is a journey that's not smooth, but lesson-filled. Our great challenge is to be open to learn as we go. Sadly, rarely do we learn from our experiences, especially if bad, because we don't accept them. We need to ask Jesus to lead us through these bad experiences as He promised, and show us how to grow from them.

Because we don't use these events He presents to develop us, we repeat mistakes and act daily like each outing is our first. We are "busy" with our priorities that spotlight urgent matters without everlasting significance, so we side-step God's messages He chooses specially for us.

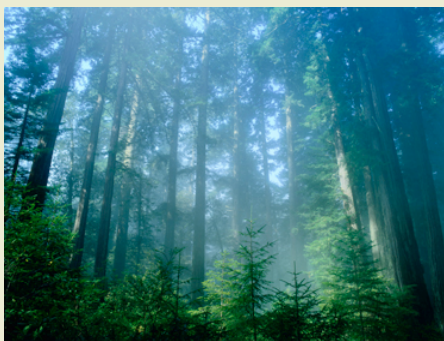
This month we look at some journeys with several life-lessons. We will highlight a few and look at how we might apply them daily as we stay alert to Jesus' teachings. Don't miss God's faithfulness that permeates these journeys:

- September 1-7: Egypt to Canaan
- September 8-14: Jerusalem to Moab Return
- September 15-21: The Cistern to the Mansion
- September 22-30: Shepherd to King

Topic for the Week: Shepherd to King

September 22-30

The Word



1 Samuel 16:11-12

¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." ¹² So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

This week we take three les-

sons from the many in King David's journey from *nobody* to *somebody*; more fittingly, from a *shepherd boy* to a *king*. In God's Kingdom, the following applies:

1. God uses Nobody's
2. The battle is the Lord's
3. God expects devotion not perfection

God Uses Nobody's

Imagine you are Samuel at Jesse's house to anoint his son as Israel's next king. You don't know which one; God will tell you in time. You see Eliab who animates you. He looks "kingly, so he must be the one," you think. But God says no; not him. God tells you His selection standard is different: He

looks at the heart, not the externals (**1 Samuel 16:6-7**).

Jesse presents seven sons to you but God chooses none. Startled, you think, "What's happening? God said one of Jesse's sons would be the next king! Did I miss him?" So you ask Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse ponders briefly then says, "There is still the youngest," ... "but he is tending the sheep." Implying, "but it can't be him"!

In human terms, how could David be God's choice as the next king? He was the youngest, had "no training," and was merely a shepherd-boy. That's not logical.

Sometimes the world tells us we are *nobodies*; we have no skills or talents. So we become depressed, we withdraw, and we stay away from offering our serv-

ices, even though we believe we can contribute. That's not how God sees us. God sees each of us as *significant* in His Kingdom. Besides, when He chooses us for a task, He knows we will be able to do it because He will give us what we need--that's a promise; look at Moses, Paul, Peter ...

Then again, some of us think we have it all together, so we control people and events. We don't look to Jesus but we decide to do everything in our own strength. We think we need *nobody* so we trust *nobody*. Sadly, we end up in big trouble. This is the world's standards. Simply put, be tough, decisive, look out for number one, "just go for it!"

The world wants *somebody* with a proven track record, university degrees, and leadership skills, to be the leader. But **God has only one condition: love Him with all your heart, soul, and mind--obey Him.** That's all. He will take you as you are and will enable you to do what He needs in His Kingdom. All He wants is your love and devotion, which leads to your obedience. He doesn't want *somebody* to help Him.

The world tells us to go to high school, then university. After that go to work, perhaps marry, buy a house, start a family, and become an elder in church. Essentially, keep doing stuff to become *somebody*. The busier we are the more important folks think we are, even if we are busy doing nothing lasting.

The Psalmist, inspired by God, reminds us in Psalms 46:1, "*God is our refuge and strength an ever-present help in trouble.*" God does not want us to perform in our strength. He wants us to allow Him to work in and through us. In Psalm 46:10-11, the Psalmist wrote:

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

We must learn to be still. Young David tended sheep, did not seek to be king, but had many *still* moments with his Lord. That's how he developed a heart for God. Before going to anoint David, Samuel told Saul:

¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD'S command." - **1 Samuel 13:13-14.**

God's choice for the top job, Israel's king, was David, a nobody in the eyes of the world, but "*a man after [God's] own heart*".

The Battle is The Lord's

In God's Kingdom, there are no hierarchies: Neither bright people nor dumb people. Neither strong people nor weak people. *Believers* are God's children whom He loves unconditionally. When he calls us,

He equips us. So all He wants is our love and devotion--our obedience. That's why He created us.

David took his responsibilities seriously. Though He knew he would replace Saul as king, he did not get anxious and rush beyond God, but waited on God's timing. After Samuel anointed him, he went back to minding sheep! Do you believe this? How unlike us! We would tell the world we have arrived: we are "big shots!" But this wasn't an issue with David.

Saul sent for David while he tended sheep, and David became an armor-bearer and his musician. Saul liked Him and his soothing music (**1 Samuel 16:19-23**). David was loyal to Saul and calmed him with music from his harp. As he ministered to Saul, he chose to be still, and continued minding sheep as needed. In **1 Samuel 17:15** we read, "*But David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.*" Again, we see David's humility, loyalty, and devotion to His Lord.

David did not promote Saul's removal from the throne but remained loyal even when Saul tried to kill him (**1 Samuel 19:8-10**).

During the period when he traveled from home to the palace, his father sent him to the battlefield with food for his brothers and their leaders. There, Goliath's presence caused a stand off between the Philistines and Israelites.

When he arrived, Eliab showed his jealous, mean side. Rather than

being thankful his father sent his brother, David, with a meal from home to this risky place, he was critical. Read Eliab's critical comments in **1 Samuel 17:28-29**:

²⁸ 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 desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."

²⁹ "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?"

Here David showed another important lesson. Rather than allowing Eliab's comment to distract him, he focused on the key matter at hand: Goliath, who had disgraced Israel by defying their army for 40 days: In **1 Samuel 17:26**, we read:

²⁶ 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?"

Goliath was a human giant, over 10 feet tall. David, young, inexperienced in these battles, was no match for him, yet he fought him. This was no ordinary fight, though. David knew he could not defeat Goliath alone. Goliath, dressed properly, was bigger,

stronger, more experienced than David. But David also knew the battle was not his, but the Lord's. He was sure God would hand Goliath over to Israel.

David understood, in God's Kingdom, there are no giants! So he did what he sensed he should do—he fought under the Lord's guidance: "*in the name of the Lord almighty, the God of the armies of Israel.*"

... "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. ⁴⁶This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel (**1 Samuel 17:45-46**).

David's faith and confidence in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's God, brought about Israel's victory. David knew he was merely God's instrument.

God Expects Devotion not Perfection

Beware of exalting David! He was human. He didn't sail through life effortlessly and challenge-free. His life was imperfect. Like us, he sinned. He committed adultery with Bathsheba then arranged her husband's murder. But he paid for

his disobedience as God brought "calamity" on his household.

Yet, God said he was a man after His own heart. We glimpse David's heart in his Psalms. They show his willingness to accept what he did, repent, confess, and then return to the Lord.

His discussion with the Prophet Nathan whom God sent to him after he killed Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, provides great insight. In **2 Samuel 12:1-7** Nathan described allegorically, Uriah's murder. At first, David didn't connect Nathan's story with his sin but "... burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die" (**2 Samuel 12:5**)!

To be sure, he deserved to die. But read his response to this sin in **Psalms 51** that he wrote following Nathan's visit. He poured out his heart to the Lord. In verses 2 and 10, he writes:

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin
¹⁰ Create in me a new heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me

In verse 4, he states something we believers ought to realize when we stumble: "*Against You, You only, I have sinned...*" In our legalistic society, the issue isn't, if I have committed a wrong, but did someone catch me in the act? Then, when caught, how do I get out? And can I "plea bargain?" We forget it's against our Lord we have "*done what is evil.*"

Application



Acts 13:16-23

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: “Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country, he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert, he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years. “After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’ “From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

King David was a man after God’s heart: always turning to Him to praise Him and to accept His Lordship. This week as you

tackle the many challenges at home, work, and elsewhere, meditate on Psalm 40:4: *Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.* Ponder these questions:

1. Do you feel you are a “nobody” that God isn’t interested in?
 - i. King David was just an ordinary man who loved the Lord with all His heart. That’s all God wants from you.
 - ii. God uses whom He chooses. He can use you (Jonah 1:15-17). Are you available?
3. Are you putting off confronting your Goliath?
 - i. This could be a difficult work assignment or personal matter with children, spouse, friend, or parent in law.
 - ii. The battle is the Lord’s. Ask the Lord to take control of this and show you how to approach it (2 Chronicles 20:1-30). Are you ready to accept His results?
3. Are you seeking perfection in your life?
 - i. You may be struggling at school, home, or office to do everything perfectly. Your spouse, parent, boss or others may criticize everything you do.

Don’t despair, take all your challenges to the Lord. All He wants is your devotion.

Will you trust Him to guide you, starting today?

Your Journey

- ❖ Are you working *for* God or *with* God?
- ❖ Are you listening, hearing, responding to God?
- ❖ Are you worshipping where God’s Word is preached faithfully?
- ❖ Are there lifestyle changes you need to make?

Considering this month’s theme, *Life Lessons*, this period’s topic, *Shepherd to King*, each day reflect on the specific verses in the *Personal Reflection* section below. These questions might help your reflection:

- Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
- How do these verses apply to me today?
- What lessons from these verses can I start to do today?



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Memory Verse

Psalm 40: 13

To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.

P e r s o n a l R e f l e c t i o n s

September 22nd: 1 Samuel 16: 6-12; Psalm 46: 1-11

September 23rd: 1 Samuel 13:13-14; 1 Samuel 17:15

September: 24th : 1 Samuel 19:8-10

September 25-26th: Psalm 40

September 27-28th : Psalm 51

September 29th : 1 Samuel 17:26-29

September 30th : 1 Samuel 17:45-47