

CRUCIBLE

The Choices that Change Your Life Forever

Session 1: Image vs. Character

Session 2: Fear vs. Faith

Session 3: Circumstances vs. Truth

Session 4: Deception vs. Integrity

Session 5: Arrogance vs. Humility

Session 6: Disappointment vs. Expectancy

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WALK THRU THE BIBLE®

BIBLICAL CHARACTER SERIES

Session 1: Image vs. Character

The Background
1 Samuel
8:4-9

The people asked Samuel to appoint a _____ so they could be like all the other _____.

The people _____ God's leadership in favor of a man they could see and touch.

1 Samuel
10:21-24

Saul was _____ as Israel's first _____.

Saul was _____ impressive but _____ weak.

The Need
1 Samuel
13:13-14

God eventually _____ Saul as king, and sent Samuel to search for a new king with a _____ like God's.

The Search
1 Samuel
16:6-7

Samuel almost chose the wrong king because he was focused on the wrong _____.

God warned Samuel not to consider the person's _____, but his _____.

Even today, people value _____, but God values _____.

1 Samuel
16:10-13

Even Jesse, David's father, _____ David as a potential king.

But God told Samuel that David was the _____.

Session 1: Image vs. Character

The Pattern
1 Corinthians 1:26-29

God often chooses to qualify the _____ rather than call the _____.

Psalm 78:70-72

More than anything else, David was a shepherd who led God's people with a heart of _____ and hands of _____.

The Big Question

How did God transform a young shepherd boy into the greatest king Israel ever had?

How does God transform us into people with a heart like His?

The Answer

The Crucible:

1. A vessel used for melting a substance that requires a high degree of _____

2. A severe _____

3. A place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause _____ or _____

James 1:2-5

God has chosen to use _____ to develop our _____.

We can choose whether to _____ or _____ God's _____.

Session 1: Image vs. Character

Discussion Questions

1. The word crucible has three definitions:
    - A vessel used for melting a substance that requires a high degree of heat
    - A severe test
    - A place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause change or development.

   In what ways can you relate to these definitions?

2. How do you think our society would change if we began valuing people's hearts instead of their outward image?

3. How do you think our church (or small group) would change if we began valuing people's hearts more than their outward image?

4. Israel wanted a king because they wanted to be like all the other nations. Can you relate to that? In what circumstances have you made decisions in order to be more like other people?

5. Think through some of your recent decisions. Who were you trying to please? How much does your image usually play into your decision-making process? How much does God's perspective factor into your decisions?

6. God often chooses to qualify the called rather than call the qualified. In what ways does that encourage you or challenge you?

7. Are you in a crucible moment right now? If so, in what ways is it challenging or testing you?

FINAL APPLICATION: We can choose whether to resist or embrace God's process. What choice will you make?

Session 2: Fear vs. Faith

The Setting
1 Samuel
17:1-3

David and Goliath is a story of _____.

The real contrast is not David versus Goliath, but David versus _____.

The Challenge
1 Samuel
17:4-10

Saul faces Goliath with _____.
David faces Goliath with _____.

The Responses
1 Samuel
17:11-27

Saul is _____ by fear.

David is _____ by faith.

Saul is concerned about _____ _____.

David is concerned about _____ _____.

The Critics
1 Samuel
17:28-33

Faith is a great _____ to those who are controlled by fear.

Eliab questions David's _____.

Saul questions David's _____.

The Preparation
1 Samuel
17:34-40

God's faithfulness in the _____ is the basis for our faith in the _____.

God had prepared both _____ and _____ to fight Goliath.

Saul _____ God's past faithfulness.

David _____ God's past faithfulness.

Session 2: Fear vs. Faith

The Battle
1 Samuel
17:41-47

Saul views Goliath as _____ battle.

David views Goliath as _____ battle.

1 Samuel
17:48-52

Fear and faith are both _____.

Contrast of Saul and David

	SAUL	**DAVID**
Response	Fear	Faith
Result	Paralyzed	Energized
Concern	His Life	God's Honor
Perspective	My Battle	God's Battle
Impact	Army Retreats	Army Charges

Discussion Questions

Session 2: Fear vs. Faith

1. Among God's key tools for transforming us are the 'giants' in our lives. Who or what is your Goliath?

2. When have you had to deal with something that scared or intimidated you? Did you approach it with faith or with fear? What was the result?

3. Many people have accepted their Goliaths as a fact of life. Is there ever a time to walk away from the battle?

4. When we decide to walk by faith, we may quickly find that those controlled by fear oppose us. Why do you think this is? Have you experienced this dynamic in your life? How did you respond?

5. Saul tried to dress David in his own battle gear and offered David his own weapons to use. Have you ever been in that situation - trying to succeed in "clothes" that don't fit? Why is it important to approach your Goliaths as yourself and not trying to be like someone else?

6. Last week we saw that God often chooses to qualify the called rather than call the qualified. Many times God puts us in situations that we don't understand and don't feel equipped to handle. What do you think your Goliath looks like from God's point of view? How do you think your life would change if you acted as if your Goliath was God's battle and not yours?

FINAL APPLICATION: What step do you think God wants you to take first to conquer your Goliath by faith?

Session 3: Circumstances vs. Truth

Introduction

We often base our decisions on our circumstances rather than on God's truth.

The Background
1 Samuel
13:13-14

Because Saul acted foolishly, God _____ his reign and decided to _____ him with David.

"But there is a deeper lesson taught here, which every Christian does well to take thoroughly to heart. It is this: we need to be exceedingly cautious how we interpret the events of Providence and what conclusions we draw from them, lest we mistake the opportunity of following out our own inclinations for God's approval of our own conduct." A.W. Pink

The Conflict
1 Samuel
18:12-16

Saul was both _____ and _____ of David.

Saul made repeated attempts to _____ David.

The Opportunity
1 Samuel
18:12-16

The circumstances were _____.

David had _____ he needed to kill Saul.

- Complete _____
- Loyal _____
- Ideal _____

The Choice
1 Samuel
24:4b-7

But David also knew God's _____.

He recognized that Saul was God's _____.

Session 3: Circumstances vs. Truth

The Dilemma

God had promised David he would be king. But why the delay?

God's process is almost always _____ than we expected.

God's timing is almost always _____ than we hoped.

The Opportunity Returns

1 Samuel 26:7-12

Once again, the circumstances appear to be _____.

This time, Abishai _____ to kill Saul for David.

But David _____ Abishai to harm Saul because he is God's anointed.

The Validation

1 Samuel 26:21

Saul recognizes David's _____ and promises to stop threatening him.

1 Samuel 26:25

Saul even asks God to _____ David and predicts David will accomplish great things.

The Coronation

2 Samuel 5:1-5

When David was finally anointed king, his heart was _____ and his hands were _____.

The Application

So, what about you?

What is the biggest decision you are struggling with right now?

Will you base your decision on your _____ or God's _____?

Session 3: Circumstances vs. Truth

Discussion Questions

1. Are you struggling with a decision today? Is there something you've been waiting for or praying about that God hasn't yet answered? If so, in what ways have you been tempted to take matters into your own hands? In what ways are you choosing to focus on truth?

2. We've all heard the saying "When God closes a door, He opens a window." Have you found that to be true in your experience? When your present circumstances don't seem to reflect God's truth, how have you been able to discern His will?

3. Read Matthew 7:24-27. True security comes from building our home on the "rock" of God's Word. In what ways do you depend on tangible security instead of on God in your life? What sources of provision and protection other than Him do you tend to seek?

4. One of the most challenging things for anyone to do is wait for an answer or direction from God, yet in Psalm 46:10 He tells us to be still. The Psalms, many of them written by David, are filled with instructions to wait on God. How hard is that for you to do? Have you ever mistaken an open door for God's will? Are you ever tempted to take control or manipulate circumstances?

5. "God's process is almost always different than we expected"
   "God's timing is almost always slower than we hoped"
   How have you seen this play out in your life? Looking back on your life, what would have happened if you'd received what you wanted exactly when you wanted it?

FINAL APPLICATION: What is the biggest decision you are struggling with right now? Will you commit to base your decision on God's truth instead of your circumstances?

Session 4: Deception vs. Integrity

The Crisis
2 Samuel
11:1-5

D_____
T_____
S_____
D_____

The Pattern
James
1:14-15

The Cover-up
2 Samuel
11:6-11

Phase 1: Get Uriah Home

David demanded _____ gratification.
Uriah practiced _____ gratification.
David abused his _____.
Uriah proved his _____.

2 Samuel
11:12-13

Phase 2: Get Uriah Drunk

2 Samuel
11:14-17

Phase 3: Get Uriah Killed

DESIRE > TEMPTATION > SIN > DEATH

This pattern is not _____.
It can be _____ by the choices we make in response to God's grace.

The Promise
1 Corinthians
10:11-13

God always provides a way out or _____.

The Aftermath
2 Samuel
11:26-27

All's well that ends well.
Uriah dies.
Bathsheba mourns.
David marries Bathsheba.
Bathsheba gives birth.
They all lived happily ever after...

"But the thing David had done displeased the Lord".

Session 4: Deception vs. Integrity

The Choices

Continue on the road that leads to _____.

Take the _____ God provides and _____ _____.

Even better, stay on the right road all along.

2 Samuel 11:1

This tragic series of events could have all been _____ if David had been where he _____.

Discussion Questions

Session 4: Deception vs. Integrity

1. Look at this progress chart that was discussed in this session:
   DESIRE > TEMPTATION > SIN > DEATH
   What were your initial thoughts about this chart?
   How have you seen this pattern played out in your life?

2. The demand for immediate gratification is a rampant problem in today's world. When you make decisions, how often do you think about the long range consequences? Do you tend to be more preoccupied with the immediate benefits of your decisions or their long term effects? Why?

3. In addition to long range consequences, David didn't think about the collateral damage of his sin. His choice to sleep with Bathsheba impacted much more than just the two of them. In what ways have you seen your sin impact those around you? In what ways have you seen the sins of others impact you?

4. Before we do the unthinkable, we think the undoable. Why is it important to keep our thoughts pure? How can we do that?

5. This tragic series of events could have all been avoided if David had been where he belonged. What implications does that statement have for your life? How can being where we're supposed to be keep us from doing what we shouldn't do?

6. Darkness and secrecy help fuel the power of sin. Is there any sin you need to bring to the light? If so, what steps can you take this week to find someone safe to talk to and discuss it with them?

FINAL APPLICATION: What positive steps does God want you to take in order to protect your moral purity?

Session 5: Arrogance vs. Humility

The Illusion

All's well that ends well.
Uriah dies.
Bathsheba mourns.
David marries Bathsheba.
Bathsheba gives birth.
They all lived happily ever after.

The Reality
2 Samuel
11:27b

God is _____.

David is _____.

The Summons
2 Samuel
12:1a

Sending is an expression of _____.

Going is an expression of _____.

The Case
2 Samuel
12:1-4

David pronounces the _____
without knowing he is the _____.

The Verdict
2 Samuel
12:5-6

David arrogantly _____ another's sin
but is _____ to his own sin.

When we deceive _____
we eventually deceive _____.

The Accusation
2 Samuel
12:7-10

Nathan charges David with the _____.

Nathan contrasts God's _____ with
David's _____.

Nathan accuses David of hating _____ _____.

Nathan accuses David of hating _____.

Session 5: Arrogance vs. Humility

The Sentencing
2 Samuel
12:11-12

Nathan predicts _____ and _____ for David's family.

The sentence is _____ because the _____ fits the _____.

The Confession
2 Samuel
12:13a

David finally _____ his sin.

David humbly _____ of his sin.

The Victim
2 Samuel
12:13b-14

Sin always affects _____ victims.

Confession does not take away all _____.

The Relief
Psalm
32:1-5

At last, David experiences _____, _____, and _____ with God.

The Epilogue
2 Samuel
12:24-25

God blesses David and Bathsheba with a son whom they name _____, which means _____.

David demonstrates his humility by continuing to _____ Nathan's counsel.

The Tribute
1 Chronicles
3:4-8

David and Bathsheba _____ Nathan by naming a son after him.

The Legacy
Luke
3:23-24, 31

God honors David and Bathsheba's son, Nathan, by giving him a place in the _____ _____ of Jesus.

Psalm
51:10-13

God so completely redeemed David's greatest sin that He brought the _____ through the children who came from it.

Session 5: Arrogance vs. Humility

Discussion Questions

1. Uriah dies. Bathsheba mourns. David marries Bathsheba. Bathsheba gives birth. They all live happily ever after. All's well that ends well. Does sin ever end that neatly? What are some lingering consequences of sin that you have seen in your life or others?

2. Being sent to confront a king with his sin was no easy task. How much faith and trust do you think Nathan must have had in order to obey God's instructions? Can you remember a time when you had to do something difficult because it was God's will?

3. "The thing David had done displeased the Lord." Have you ever covered up a secret only to find yourself miserable? Which do you think is less painful: coming clean or maintaining the secret?

4. Many people believe that whatever happens between consenting adults is fine. What do you think God's perspective on that is? Why do you think it's important to confess sin to God and others who have been affected by it? Why does it require great humility to do that?

5. What can we learn about how to confront someone from Nathan's example? Why do you think his approach was able to penetrate David's defenses?

6. God so completely redeemed David's greatest sin that David named a son after Nathan, and this son had a place in the genealogy of Jesus. To what degree do you let past mistakes "disqualify" you from present or future opportunities?

FINAL APPLICATION: Are there any areas of your life in which you need to follow David's path back to God? If so, what steps can you take this week to do that?

Session 6: Disappointment vs. Expectancy

David's Great Desire
2 Samuel 7:1-3

David is _____ for all God has done for him.

David wants to do something _____ for God.

David shares his dream with Nathan who _____ his plans.

God's Unexpected Answer
2 Samuel 7:8-13

God affirms David's _____, but tells him he is _____ _____ _____ to build the temple.

David's Surprising Response
2 Samuel 7:18, 27-29

1 Chronicles 28:2-6

David could have focused on his _____

Instead, David _____ to worship God.

David fully _____ God to fulfill His promise.

David _____ his desire to fit God's plan.

David passionately _____ his role in God's plan.

Session 6: Disappointment vs. Expectancy

David charges the leaders.
(1 Chronicles 28:8)

David charges Solomon.
(1 Chronicles 28:9-10)

David gives Solomon the plans.
(1 Chronicles 28:11-19)

David encourages Solomon.
(1 Chronicles 28:20-21)

David gave his royal and personal resources.
(1 Chronicles 29:1-5)

David collects gifts from the people.
(1 Chronicles 29:5-9)

David commits the whole project to God.
(1 Chronicles 29:10-20)

The Big Question

What would it look like for you to move beyond your disappointment and embrace your role in God's plan?

Final Thoughts

Ephesians 2:10 — For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Psalm 37:4 — Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Discussion Questions

Session 6: Disappointment vs. Expectancy

1. Before David began following his dream, he stopped and asked God if the dream fit His plans. How much frustration do you think we could save ourselves if we only pursued the dreams God endorsed? How intentional are you about slowing down to listen for God's direction?

2. What do you think would happen if you laid down your expectations and asked God to show you His plans for your life? Is there anything you need to let go of in order to hear God's plans for you?

3. David could have focused on his disappointment, but he chose to worship God. How do you think he was able to do that? Have you ever responded to God that way or seen someone who has?

4. In what ways has your life turned out differently than you expected? In what areas of life have you experienced the denial or delay of a dream? Have you been able to move past your disappointment in that area?

5. Have you thought much about the bigger picture and how your dreams may extend beyond your own generation? How would you feel about your delayed dreams if you knew God had delayed them in order to do something more lasting with them than you envisioned?

6. Read David's prayer in 2 Samuel 7:27-29. Do you think this prayer required courage? Why is it scary to let go of our expectations and embrace God's plan? What did David do to pursue his dream even after he knew he would not see the fulfillment of it? What can you do to pursue your God-given longings while you are waiting for their fulfillment?

FINAL APPLICATION: What would it look like for you to move beyond your disappointment and embrace your role in God's plans?

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