
Growth Group Notes: David 1 – an unexpected choice



Warm Up...

Thinking about the way in which the world around us defines success, what kinds of things do you think most people would consider make someone successful?

Now thinking about this new year in your own life, how might you complete the sentence

"I would consider 2017 a successful year if...."?

background to series on David's life

How do we remember the Old Testament figure of David?

(at this point you might want to stop and share what you do know about David already)

Shepherd boy turned king? Defeater of giants? Mighty warrior? With the God's accolade (recorded in Acts 13:22) "a man after my own heart"? But he is also the man who stole someone else's wife, arranged a murder to cover it up, and whose weak fathering led his own family into chaos and destruction. Did God make some kind of mistake when he chose David?

God loves to give us concrete examples and David is someone whose life brings us rich lessons; both good and bad. Here is a man from whom we can learn great lessons of faith and confidence and yet a man who is ultimately weak, just like you or I, and whose life points to a greater One still to come.

Key stats for David's life (as recorded in 1 & 2 Samuel)

Time - The action takes place some 3000 years ago, approximately four hundred years after Joshua (the leader who took over from Moses) led the Israelites from the wilderness into Canaan, the Promised Land

Situation in Israel at this point - Despite being in the Promised Land, things were far from perfect. Israel never really followed YHWH their God with any lasting conviction. The leaders or Judges God raised up to defeat Israel's enemies, helped point people back to God temporarily, but each time things quickly slipped back into godless chaos again. So the people approached Samuel, the current judge-leader, and demanded he appoint a King to lead them, like all the other nations around them.

Samuel knows this is a dangerous request, for Israel has always been different to the other nations, with YHWH as her king, but God tells him to go along with their request, appointing a man of his choice. The first King that Samuel anoints is Saul, a man who is physically head and shoulders above the rest. But soon it seems that the new power has gone to his head and his greed stops him from following God's instructions. 1 Samuel 15 ends with the tragic words: "and the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel." Saul is not the one they had hoped for. A true king is still needed.

read 1 Samuel 16:1-5

How would you describe Samuel's feelings at the start of this passage, v1-3?

Do you think these feelings were justified?

How does Samuel respond to God's words in v3?

Reflecting on God's purposes

When is it good for you to know that God is in control of all situations?

How does Samuel model trust for us in this situation?

What will it mean for you to trust and obey God whatever 2017 brings?

Are there specific things that you are worrying about at the moment that you may need to place (afresh?) into God's care.

read 1 Samuel 16:6-13

Why did Samuel think Eliab would be the one God wanted?

What is God's take on the way Samuel came to this opinion?

What do you think those present would have thought of the one who is eventually chosen, v11-12?

Why would David have been such an unlikely choice?

Key verse: 1 Samuel 16v7

**People look at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart**

Reflect on Unexpected choices

Can you think of any other instances in Bible history, church history or in your current experience, where God chooses the unlikely and frankly under-qualified?

Looking at this verse from 1 Corinthians – why do you think God so often chooses to work this way?

²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29

Flick back in the Bible to 1 Samuel 13:14, why does God actually chose David?

Reflect on "externals vs heart"

Samuel here (nor any other of the onlookers) cannot see what God can see: David's heart. Rather he is concentrating on external appearances.

Thinking about the "successes" we thought about at the start of the session – where might we need some personal recalibration so that we are not so concerned with "externals" and are more focused on "matters of the heart"?

Why not get specific and think about what are the external things take up a large amount of your energy, focus, time and money? Are there any that God might be calling us to lay down, in order to focus on matters of the heart?

(if you have time, do read to the end of chapter 16 to see where God places David next)

Pray together

You may need to spend some time in confession and seeking forgiveness, as well as supporting one another and looking forward asking God to help you focus on the right things in 2017.