



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 01 2022

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 powerful pressures that were trying to force him

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

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.

RABBI 101

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 accord-

ing 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 scored three victories:

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.

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 *Con-*

necting 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.

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.