

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Potential in Your Placement

September 3, 2018

The story of King David begins in 1 Samuel 16. As the story begins, we see a prophet of God, named Samuel, mourning God's rejection of Israel's current king, King Saul.

God tells Samuel to stop mourning and to go visit Jesse from Bethlehem. It is from Jesse's family that God would be choosing the next king of Israel. Upon arrival, Samuel is introduced to seven of Jesse's sons. They were all strong, young men, who by appearance would make great kings.

To Samuel's surprise, none of the seven sons were chosen by God to be king. The one God had chosen was Jesse's eighth son, who wasn't even invited to meet Samuel. Instead, he was told to stay away and tend to the sheep.

I can only imagine what David might have been thinking as he was watching the sheep. He probably questioned his placement in life and wondered what could have been if only he had been the first born. He probably felt insignificant, overlooked, and under-appreciated. Maybe he was in a moment of questioning his place, when over the hill came a servant summoning him to meet with Samuel.

To everyone's surprise, David was chosen as God's anointed one to be the next king of Israel. As we continue to follow David's life, though, he wasn't immediately made king. In fact, we see that not much changes at first. He is still the eighth son of Jesse sent out to tend the sheep in the fields.

It is from this time of anticipation of becoming king where we can learn so much from David's story. Had David been so focused on what was to come, he could have missed what God wanted to do through him each day prior to becoming king.

In this weekend's message, Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow shared with us that if we have an unhealthy focus on tomorrow, it will undermine what God wants to do through us **TODAY**. In fact, an unhealthy view of yesterday, or even today, limits how God can use us.

However, as we learn to put our trust in God and have faith that he wants to use us right where we are, our potential to make a difference becomes limitless.

Over the next four days, we will continue to look at the story of David and learn how we can experience the limitless potential in our current placement.

Questions:

Do you see potential in your current placement?

Have you ever focused so much on what your future might hold that you missed opportunities in the present moment?

Next Steps:

Prepare to learn from the life of David this weekend by reading 1 Samuel 16 and 17.

As we wrap up our series *This Is Me*, take some time and think about the purpose God has for your life. Think about how he can use your past, personality, passion, and placement to make a difference for him.

Write down a few steps that you can take today to become a difference maker. If you struggle to come up with anything, consider completing GrowthTrack. (Cedarcreek.tv/GrowthTrack)

Prayer:

God, forgive me for all the times I missed what you were up to in the here and now. Help me to keep my eyes focused on you, not my past or my future. Thank you for the story of David, and help me to be aware of how you want to use me in my current placement to make a difference for you. Amen.

No Coincidences

September 4, 2018

This weekend, Josh Whitlow talked about how we can experience limitless potential in our current placement. Today, we will focus in on 1 Samuel 17 where we pick up the story of David.

1 Samuel 17:17-20

¹⁷ One day Jesse said to David, "Take this basket of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread, and carry them quickly to your brothers. ¹⁸ And give these ten cuts of cheese to their captain. See how your brothers are getting along, and bring back a report on how they are doing." ¹⁹ David's brothers were with Saul and the Israelite army at the valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines. ²⁰ So David left the sheep with another shepherd and set out early the next morning with the gifts, as Jesse had directed him.

Although David had already been anointed as the future king of Israel, he is still out in the fields with the sheep. His father asks him to be delivery boy and messenger, not exactly kingly duties. Instead of seeing this errand as a distraction or an annoyance, however, David obeys his father. This story clearly teaches that extraordinary outcomes begin with ordinary obedience and that this is one of the ways we can begin to experience limitless potential in our current placement.

But how do *we* get into the position to be used by God at a moment's notice?

David accomplished it through what *seems* to be a series of coincidences. His dad, Jesse, *just happened* to ask him to go take lunch to his brothers serving in King Saul's army who *just happened* to be on the front lines facing the Philistines and Goliath. David had some serious fighting skills from protecting his flock of sheep from lions and bears. Finally, David, a teen, *coincidentally*, chose to obey his dad and go without hesitation or complaint.

There's only one problem: God does not "do" coincidences. God used David's ordinary obedience to his father's request to run an errand and his years of obediently protecting those sheep to go down in history as "David the Giant Killer."

There is one more thing that made him useful that day. David, the writer of many of the most beautiful psalms, also had great respect for God. Consequently, he

was filled with righteous indignation when he heard this pagan challenge the army of the one true God. So, his obedience and desire to serve his true master, the great I Am, gave him the ability to serve right where he stood.

We, too, can be just like David. Above all, put service to God at the center of your life every day, and he will bless you with plenty of opportunities to serve him and to help others to know him. Do this by making yourself available to God. Put spending time with him in the Bible and prayer first on your “to do” list – not your cell phone, not your kids, not your job – God and the Bible. Then, you will be able to hear him clearly when he calls, and you will be eager to obey.

Living a life of service for the Lord unlocks his limitless potential in you and will give you the best life there is: full of deep meaning, rewarding actions, and blessings beyond number. How can living for yourself stack up against living for the Lord? It can't.

Questions:

Where is God calling you to obey today?

Do you hold yourself accountable for living a Christ-centered life? If not, why not?

What will you do to change?

Next Steps:

Begin spending time in God's Word and in prayer at the beginning of your day. You will be amazed at how this changes your life for the better.

Take God with you into every situation and pray without ceasing.

Prayer:

Good morning, Lord. I turn this day and my time in it over to you. Please use me however you want in your service. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Your Uniqueness is a Gift

September 5, 2018

One of my most vivid memories of spending time with my father during my childhood in Germany is him showing me how a prism worked. A prism is an object made from glass, or another transparent material, that has a very specific shape so that it separates white light into the spectrum of colors. I have always been a science geek, and when I saw for the first time how the prism split “ordinary” white light into all these beautiful and very different colors, I was amazed. White light actually consisted of all these beautiful colors! It boggled my mind.

Today’s *LivingItOut* will focus on the second point Josh Whitlow made during this week’s message when he spoke about the question “How can you experience the limitless potential in your current placement?”

Trust that faith, not your _____, will determine how God uses you.

- Faith, not your age, will determine how God uses you.
- Faith, not your education, will determine how God uses you.
- Faith, not your occupation, will determine how God uses you.

I think we often forget that each of us makes up one very unique shade of color in that huge spectrum of light, and together, we make up the glorious white light that is humanity. We are all very unique, and yet we all contribute to form that wonderful white light. Unfortunately, we too often think that we cannot make a difference because of our age, education, occupation, or other perceived limitations. But it is *exactly* because we are all very unique in our personalities, our pasts, and our passions that we can each serve God’s purpose for us. It is our faith in God—that he placed us right here, right now, with our unique gifts for a purpose—that allows us to unleash our abilities to make a difference in the lives of others .

Samuel 17:32-33

³² “Don’t worry about this Philistine,” David told Saul. “I’ll go fight him!” ³³ “Don’t be ridiculous!” Saul replied. “There’s no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You’re only a boy, and he’s been a man of war since his youth.”

Hebrews 11:1

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.

So, David was placed by God in the right spot, at the right time, with the right personality, and the right past to defeat Goliath. Because David had faith that he was where he was supposed to be that day, he was able to unleash his potential and serve God's purpose for him. He was able to do so because he did not question his placement in his "today" that day.

I am very blessed to have a wonderful circle of close friends who have supported me through some tough times in my life and kept me grounded. When I look at my circle of friends, they are all from very different backgrounds than me and most are a different age. But, they all crucially contribute to my life in very positive and meaningful ways, just like I am trying to do for them wherever I can.

So, the next time you think that you cannot be of use to God because you do not work in a church, or don't have the right education, or because you're too old or too young, perhaps you should take a step back. Remember that for white light to shine brightly, it needs all the myriad colors that contribute to the spectrum. So whether you are an Alabaster (light brown), a Fuchsia (bright pink), an Inchworm (pale green), a Jonquil (yellow), a Mauve (purple), an Azure (blue), or a Zomp (green), you matter! And you can contribute today to someone else's life in a meaningful way by serving the purpose that God has intended for you.

Questions:

What about your occupation, education, age, or life experience makes you a unique color? What skills or strengths have you used to get to where you are today (remember that it is totally okay that you are a work in progress, like we all are), and how could you use them to help others?

Next Steps:

Make a list of all the limiting labels that people have given you. Take that piece of paper and destroy it in some way: rip it up, burn it, throw it away, etc. Praise God that it is our faith in him that matters, not our labels.

Prayer:

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for making us all different and unique colors so that we may contribute to the beautiful white light that is you. Thank you for

walking with me on my journey to this present day. Please help me see how my "today" can be of help to others. Amen.

This post was written by Cordula Mora, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

What are You Preparing For?

September 6, 2018

This past weekend, Josh discussed three main points of how God uses us. On Tuesday, we learned that God wants us to be faithful in the little things. Yesterday, we learned that God wants us to have faith that he is the one that will do the work. Today, we are unpacking how an unhealthy focus on **yesterday** will limit how God wants to use us today. God has been preparing us all along, and what we are experiencing today will help us to face what we come up against tomorrow.

1 Samuel 17:34-35

³⁴ But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death.

It was not on the day David took lunch to his brothers on the front line of battle that he decided to fight Goliath. He had actually made the decision long before he had even heard the Philistine taunting the nation of Israel and making fun of their God. David made the decision when he chose to trust God and do what he had been called to do, even when it seemed impossible. David knew that God had protected him while he was tending the sheep and gave him strength to handle any threats. He trusted that the same God who had delivered him from the lion and the bear would now deliver him from the giant.

Psalms 100:5

For the Lord is Good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

God's Word is timeless. What was true during biblical times is true today. God prepared David to defeat Goliath, and we can trust that he is preparing us today for something important tomorrow. Ten years ago, I lost a dear friend who had struggled with cancer for nine and a half years. I was devastated and experienced great sadness. I leaned on God during my time of mourning, and he gave me strength. Little did I know that God was preparing me for something. About a month ago, a friend of mine also lost a life-long friend to cancer. With the coping skills God provided me, I was able to help my friend. God brings us through struggles, so we can then help others.

Questions:

Are you trusting God in something that you are going through right now? Have you asked God to help you learn from it?

Are you aware that an unhealthy focus on your past will limit how God wants to use you today?

Are you trusting God for your future?

Next Steps:

God chose David to be the king of Israel and taught him how to have courage and strength. Journal experiences in your past that God used to prepare you for today. Look for opportunities to help others who are struggling today.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to see things as you see them. Grant me the ability to learn from what I have experienced yesterday so that I may be used by you today and in the future. Inspire me with courage. Thank you for providing opportunities that I may help others. Help me to realize that I have a part in your glorious plan. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Remember!

September 7, 2018

My favorite hymn is “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” It is full of scriptural truth, observable facts, and promises kept by God the Father. The writer, Thomas Chisholm, has personally experienced God’s faithfulness. The verses start with some important truths about God: God changes not, his compassions fail not, he forever will be as he always has been. Then, it moves to the common human experience of God: Nature witnesses that God exists, and he is faithful; the sun, moon, and stars witness there is a God; the seasons witness there is a God, and we can count on them. They are clockwork to humankind. The last verse is Chisholm’s personal experience: pardon for sin, peace that endures, God’s own presence, strength for each day, hope for tomorrow. Great is God’s faithfulness!

This is precisely what David’s Psalms are about—God’s faithfulness. God is who he says he is, and all of humanity can witness God’s faithfulness in nature, even as David himself had witnessed it as a shepherd boy. David had personally experienced God’s goodness, providence, and salvation from beasts, and later, even from King Saul himself.

These testimonies are examples of how we can testify to God’s faithfulness. We are to tell of who God is in Scripture. We can talk about the observable beauty and faithfulness in nature all around us. We share about our experiences before we knew God and after we were saved. But more than that, we need to remember who we were compared to who we are now. We need to remember what God has done and trust that he is faithful and will do it again.

We look back to see what we walked through. We look back to see that we have moved. Maybe only a step, but if it is a step forward, praise God. If it is a step backward, trust that you are not alone. God is beside you. Remember the faithfulness of God, the testimonies of others that God is good. God loves you. God is with you and for you. Then, when you are on the other side of the trial or crisis or heartache or valley, you can say, “God got me through this. There wasn’t a day he was not by my side! He was faithful through it all, and I know he will be faithful this time, too.”

Attribute God’s goodness to God! Glorify him and tell others about all **he** has done for you. This is precisely what David did as a young man.

1 Samuel 17:36-37

³⁶I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! ³⁷The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the Lord be with you!"

We know the rest of the story... the Lord was with David, and he slew the giant, Goliath. The faith of a child is powerful and instructive! The same God who did that for David is here for each of us. We may not ever face a physical giant, but many times, our trial feels like one. Trust that God is who he says he is, and he will get you through it.

Questions:

Have you experienced God's pardon for sin and peace that endureth?

If not, will you place your faith in him today?

Do you look back to see God's faithfulness, or do you look back with regret?

Will you give God the glory for getting you through a past hardship?

Will you trust that God is with you now through your crisis today?

Next Steps:

If you placed your trust in God today, or last weekend, tell someone!

Study the Psalms. They are full of descriptions about God's goodness, character, and faithfulness. The writers poured out their fears, faith, and facts about the God we see, experience, and trust.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you! You have been faithful in my life, all my life. I am sorry for not recognizing all the times you were right there. Even before I knew you, you were right there. Help me to never doubt you again. You have never failed me! Thank you for your Word and your faithfulness! Amen.

This post was written by Julie Roehl, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.