

THINK IT OVER  
GOING DEEPER  
DEVOTIONAL

## Building Your Faith Expecting the Best From God

### Monday

#### **Read:**

*Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (NIV)*

*Romans 10:17 - Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (NIV)*

*Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (NIV)*

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Some may confuse “expecting the best from God” with treating God as a magic genie, or participating in performative positive thinking. In light of the verses above, let’s define “expecting the best.”

**EXPECTING THE BEST is being confident in God’s promises; that He is in control of the future, and that He loves me and has a plan for my life.**

**Q1: Write down a few differences between “the magic genie god” or positive thinking, and our definition of “expecting the best.”** \_\_\_\_\_

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King David would phrase “expecting the best from God” this way...

*Psalms 32:8 - I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will give you counsel and watch over you. (BSB)*

Throughout this week, we’re going to dig deeper into 1 Samuel 17, the chapter where a young David famously faces Goliath, and with God’s help, leaves victorious. We’ll examine David’s motivations and what he leaned on for strength. We’ll even gain some added perspective from David himself as we read his own words in Psalms. Certainly his experiences in life had great impact on his poetic wisdom (and can you imagine how formative an experience coming face to face with a legitimate giant would have been?!).

**Re-read Psalm 32:8** above and think about David, now a grown man, pouring out his heart to God in line after line of prayer (if you have time, read the whole of Psalm 32). Meanwhile, he's reflecting on his life experiences: being underestimated by everyone (including his own father), fighting giants, hiding in caves, sweet victory and bitter defeat, great gain, and personal loss. And in verse eight, his soul resonates with God's response, leaving us with an example to follow.

**Q2: David expected the best from God during good times and bad. Write a few ways that you're expecting the best from God right now.** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Tuesday**

Yesterday, we talked about how we can build our faith by expecting the best. We looked at David's words in Psalm 32:8, and our own definition based on Hebrews 11 and Romans 10. Now that we know we CAN build our faith by expecting the best from God, we will spend today and tomorrow being motivated by talking about WHY expecting the best from God is so important.

### **Read: 1 Samuel 17:1-52**

If you haven't already, spend a few minutes today reading through 1 Samuel 17:1-52. It will take less than 15 minutes. We'll go light on the questions today to make up for it :)

### **Why is it important to expect the best from God?**

#### **Because it honors God!**

*1 Samuel 17:46 - Today the Lord will hand you over to me ...I'll strike you down ... **Then all the world will know that Israel has a God!**" (HCSB)*

David wasn't in this fight to bring glory to himself. He knew that God has always been in the business of doing amazing things through unlikely people. In this case, when the story of a young boy defeating a giant warrior spreads throughout the world, everyone was (and still is) talking about how powerful and involved God is in the life of his people.

**Q1: Have you ever missed out on an opportunity to be used by God because you doubted God's best? What was it?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Q2: Has God ever used you because you were expecting the best and willing to be used by Him? What was it?** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Wednesday

Yesterday, we looked at the first of three big reasons that we should expect the best from God. Hopefully, by the end of the study today you will be fully convinced that expecting the best from God is important. Starting tomorrow, we're going to stop talking about WHY and start talking about HOW.

### **Why is it important to expect the best from God? Because it increases my ability in life!**

*1 Samuel 17:34-37 - David answered Saul: "Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Then David said, "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." (HCSB)*

David's training, however humble through a warrior's eyes, prepared him for his fight against Goliath. God knew the training David needed, and God provided David with those experiences. Imagine how David would have felt the very first time it was required for him to chase down a lion or bear. I wouldn't expect anyone to be 100% excited about the prospect. But with experience comes courage, best practices, and faith in God's plan (and in David's case, deadly accuracy with a sling).

*1 Samuel 17:49 - David put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. (HCSB)*

When we look back at our own journey, we see times God brought us through a new struggle to increase our abilities. When those abilities help us tackle a new challenge with ease, it's easy to look back and thank God for the past struggle because it resulted in a much greater positive in the present. We need to be sure to take this attitude with us into our future struggles. Expecting the best from God is easy when everything is cruising on auto-pilot, but when we come across a challenge, we must continue to expect the best from God because we know (from David's experience and our own) that our ability, courage, and faith will be increased.

**Q1. What is a struggle or challenge from your past that increased your abilities in the present?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Q2. What is a struggle or challenge you are experiencing right now that you believe will increase your ability, courage, and faith in the future?** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Why is it important to expect the best from God? Because it encourages others!**

*1 Samuel 17:52 - The men of Israel and Judah rallied, shouting their battle cry, and chased the Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. (HCSB)*

David's courage and faith in God empowered the rest of the armies of the Lord. And that wouldn't be the last time that David's faith inspired others. Throughout his life, David would become a great war general for King Saul, motivating his men to win battle after battle. After his falling out with Saul, David's faith would surround him with a core group of supporters who would stay strong with David, despite having to hide from Saul in the wilderness. As king, David carried out countless military victories including sacking the Canaanite city of Jebus, renaming it Jerusalem, and making it the capital city of Israel. Even to this day, we read the stories of David's faithfulness and are encouraged; what a blessing it would be that our faithfulness may outlive us, too.

When we expect the best from God, our stories of God's faithfulness can be a huge encouragement to others. Whether we're encouraging someone who is experiencing a similar struggle to one we've conquered in Christ, or just a general tale of God's faithfulness, sharing with others can give them the push that they need to expect the best from God.

**Q3. Using your answer from Question 1, practice writing your story in a way you could share it with someone else. If you need more space, grab a notepad.** \_\_\_\_\_

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Our stories and testimonies of God's faithfulness are so important that the more we practice them, the more willing we will be to share when we discover commonality with someone else's story.

## **Thursday**

So, like we said yesterday, now that we've talked about WHY expecting the best from God is so important, we need to think about this practically. HOW can we expect the best from God, especially when there are obstacles on our horizon?

**How do we expect the best when there are obstacles in the way?  
Tune into God every morning!**

*Psalm 5:3 - In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly. —David*

This Psalm, traditionally, falls into the genre of a morning lament/prayer. David knew how important it was to spend time with God before getting on with the rest of his day. So much so

that the morning lament is a (very) common theme throughout the rest of his Psalms. Important to note also is that David guides us in what to do both before and after we pray.

Before he prays: David lays his requests before God. The word “lay” (‘e·‘ē·rāk- Strong’s Hebrew 6188) is an orderly term. David isn’t praying in a reckless, scattering approach. Before David prays, he is thoughtful and lays out his prayers in an orderly fashion. Keep your prayers in a journal, and be thoughtful before you even start praying (even if it’s the night before). For the “non-morning people” (like me), this approach is so helpful. My mornings are reckless and scattering, so having my prayers and devotion laid out ahead of time changes the entire path of my day.

**Q1. Are you a “morning person” or not? Are you rushing around every morning? How can knowing your tendencies and habits help remove barriers that may keep you from spending time with God each morning?** \_\_\_\_\_

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After he prays: David waits expectantly for the answer to his prayers. Far too often we do the asking, but we don’t spend time listening and waiting for God’s word or answer. Be sure to build some time to listen for God into your morning routine whether that means turning off the radio or music that would play during your commute or morning shower, or just spending a minute in thoughtful silence while you wait for your microwave oatmeal.

**Q2. Mornings are typically chaotic and noisy. What are some creative ways you could find some time to quietly and expectantly listen for God’s answer to your prayer?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**How do we expect the best when there are obstacles in the way?**  
**Think on God’s promises throughout the day!**

*Psalms 119:95 - The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes. -David (NIV)*

*Psalms 119:11 - I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. - David (NIV)*

Whether it was from scheming insurrectionists looking for a throne, or the enemies of Israel who were a constant thorn in David’s side: David was always under threat. And while he faced down those dangers, he was also sure to remember God’s promises, teachings, and word. The writers of the New Testament would point out this importance as well...

*Philippians 4:8-9 - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (NIV)*

*Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (NIV)*

How are we going to remember God's promises, teachings, and words without memorization? When we come across a situation where we need to make a quick decision or say something during a conversation, there's not always a Bible around and we don't always have time to look up a verse; we have to draw on what's already in our hearts. So before we come across the quick decision or discussion, let's take some time to memorize scripture.

**Q3. What verse are you going to memorize this week? (Google a list of good verses to memorize; there are plenty of great lists. There are also plenty of great walkthroughs for how to memorize scripture. You already memorized the Macarena, so I know you got this!)**

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**Q4. How are you going to make time this week to memorize your scripture?**

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## **Friday**

Today, we're going to tackle the last two ways we can expect the best from God when there are obstacles in our way. But we're also going to carve time away from today's session so we can spend a bit more time memorizing our scripture.

**How do we expect the best when there are obstacles in the way?**  
**Trust in God's love when things look bad!**

*Psalms 42:11 - Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (NIV)*

*Psalms 91:14 - "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name." –Moses (NIV)*

David had a secret. When he was discouraged, he looked to God for strength. We know David was discouraged (a lot) because he left us so many beautiful lamentations where he poured out his struggles to God, and continued to seek God's face in the midst of them. When facing tough times, David used his poetry as a way of interfacing between his struggles and God. And God often spoke to David in the middle of his poetry, when this happens, David records God's answers in the first person as God's voice speaking to the reader. As you read the Psalms, keep your eyes opened for God's words to us delivered through David.

**Q1. David used poetry as a way of looking to God when things were tough. Is there something you have, or something you can do to look to God when things are tough?**

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## **How do we expect the best when there are obstacles in the way?**

### **Talk with other believers!**

This is why community groups and spending time with other believers is so important. While we need to be sure that our circle of influence is reaching outward to spread Jesus' love with others who may not know Jesus yet, we need to be sure that we surround ourselves with people who care about us and who can point us to the truth of scripture during difficult times.

*Psalm 119:63 - "I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts." –David (NIV)*

*Hebrews 10:25 - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV '84)*

**Q2. Who are the people you've surrounded yourself with who can point you to God's truths? If you don't have anyone like that in your circle, make a plan for starting to surround yourself with those people.** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Q3. Have you spent any time memorizing the scripture you chose yesterday? Spend the rest of this session putting a good bit of effort into your memorization.**