

GRACE CLASSICAL ACADEMY

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Let us consider...



A Life Like David

By Luke Shawhan

Mr. Shawhan teaches 7th –10th grade classes at GCA and has been at the school since 2012.

Within the next 15 years, the children at this school will be adults—many will have graduated high school; some, college. There will be new marriages, new families, and some will be sending their own children off to school. When we think about our children as adults, our minds list the different attributes we hope they have: faith and trust in Christ, humility, hard work, holiness. To my mind comes God’s word describing King David—“a man after my heart who will do all my will” (Acts 13:22). When I look at the boys in our school, my hope for them is simple: to be men after God’s heart. When I see the girls (and my own daughter), I hope they marry men like David and are women after God’s heart. But, one question nags at me: although I desire for our students to have a heart like David’s, am I willing for them to have a life like David’s? What if, in order for God to develop a heart for Him, He calls some of our students to endure and experience persecution by someone they love, to have promises from God long-delayed in their fulfillment, or to have their own children walk away from God? I would like to look at three aspects of David’s life in order to understand how God develops a person with a heart like David’s. First, David was a man

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How can our
children know

God as a
fortress for
the weary if
they never

become
weary? How
can they know

bottomless
grace if they
have never
been at the
bottom?

who took action when action was needed. Second, God consistently applied pressure to David's life. Third, David experienced the depths of his own sin and the deeper depths of God's mercy.

Hearts after God need the opportunity to act. A seed cannot grow without the presence of soil, sunshine, and water. Faith is similar. It cannot sprout without deeds. David's life demonstrated this truth. Whenever someone needed to spearhead an endeavor, David was the first in line. Goliath taunted the people of Israel with slavery and the king of Israel stood idly by; David picked up a sling and placed his faith in God. While on the run from Saul, Scripture says, "Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, everyone who was bitter in soul gathered to [David]" (1 Samuel 22). At the end of his life, David had a son too young and inexperienced to accomplish the great task set before him. Therefore, David organized all of the supplies and workmen for the construction of the temple. Scripture records David's words, "Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands. I will therefore make preparation for it" (1 Chron. 22:5). Scripture's picture of David is of a man who sees a need and then acts to resolve it. Some of his actions were certainly missteps (fleeing to Gath the second time in 1 Samuel 27), but men with hearts like David must have opportunities to lead like David. Our children need these opportunities—the opportunities need to be difficult and they need to have real consequences. These occasions are the soil in which the faith of our children will grow.

However, there are times it seems that the moments to lead are more onerous than exciting, more oppressive than joyous. But, when God prunes faith, His timing is not ours. David consistently took action when necessary, and God consistently applied pressure to David's life. Once one difficult aspect of David's life is told, another comes to the forefront. Take, for example, the slaying of Goliath. David became a hero of Israel, but by the next chapter, Saul was hurling spears at Him. Why? God had placed a tormenting spirit upon Saul; and David was in the crosshairs. David did not do anything to earn or deserve this mistreatment, but God placed David in these circumstances to grow David's trust. Another example of God applying pressure to David's life was his anointing as king. Samuel anointed David when he was a teenager, but David did not

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become king until he was thirty. God gave David ten to fifteen years of struggle—running away to Gath twice, avoiding a murderer, having two opportunities to indulge the desire for revenge, and praying on a mountain to escape the capture of Saul. God’s pressure increased as faith in Him increased. Compare this to physical training. Once one is able to bench press two hundred pounds, it is senseless to press forty-five pounds ten times and call it a workout. Workouts without sweat will not increase strength, and circumstances without uncertainty will not expand faith. If we want our children to have a heart like David’s, they need to sweat. But, the difference between physical training and God’s training must be noted. In exercise, the goal is to lift more, run faster, or increase conditioning. In God’s kingdom, the goal is not ability, but dependence upon Him.

Finally, David realized the grace of God in a manner unfathomable. In the middle of the perspiration induced by God’s pressure, David made tragic mistakes. When returning the ark of the covenant to Israel from the land of the Philistines, the Israelites improperly transported the ark. They placed it on an oxen-led cart, instead of carrying it with poles. David led the procession with “celebrating before the Lord, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals” (2 Samuel 6:5). Yet, on the journey, the oxen stumbled. One man, Uzzah, touched the ark to prevent it from falling. But man cannot touch the holiness of God, and Uzzah was struck dead for his error. David should have known how to transport the ark, and his failure led to the death of one of his men. Later in his life, David failed to execute judgment upon his son Amnon for the rape of Tamar (David’s daughter). This failure led to Tamar’s brother, Absalom, crying out at the gates of Jerusalem for justice (2 Samuel 15). Absalom soon staged a coup and started a civil war. 20,000 people died. At the root of the war was David’s inability to execute Amnon for sexual sin, a sin with which David was familiar. Finally, 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 record David’s ill-advised census: an action that brought the wrath of God upon Israel. 70,000 dead. Personally, I have trouble comprehending the number of deaths due to David’s mistakes and sins: over 90,000—a number greater than half the population size of Springfield! I would have trouble getting up in the morning if my sin caused the death of one man, but 90,000? But, to have a heart like David’s, our children need mistakes like David’s; for without these mistakes, how could David understand the grace and mercy of God? How could David develop a love for God without experiencing redemption after such grievous sin? How can our children know God as a fortress for the weary if they never become weary? How can they know bottomless grace if they have never been at the bottom? David’s sins forced him to see the depth of his depravity, but they were also an opportunity for God to display His glory. After David repented for his census, David purchased land that would soon become the site of Solomon’s temple: the Lord’s dwelling place. The temple itself was a memorial to the grace of God after great wrongdoing.

None of this is to say that the only way to become a faithful follower of Christ is to live a life exactly like David’s. Many persons in Scripture endured seemingly less and still walked with God. But, if we want our children to follow hard after God, then, at the least, we must be willing for them to experience the hardships of their sin, sweat-inducing circumstances, and opportunities for action. Again, they will be adults in 15 years, or less. Their trials are not far away. This is a hard reality; but, we also have hope. Christ himself took on the hardship of sin for all mankind, experienced pressure that brought blood-sweat, and took action to save His creation from the ravages of sin. All so we could have a heart after God. Therefore, do I want for my child to have a life like David’s? If it is what she needs to have a heart after God’s, then there is no doubt. Absolutely.

Student Work

Do EVERYTHING to the Glory of God: a poem by Paige Steelman

This poem was written as part of an assignment for 12th Grade Ethics. The assignment was to present a particular Christian ethic in an engaging way. Paige wrote this poem and created a video for it as well.

Everyone has a pointer
Pointing different ways
Sometimes it's pointed inwards
And sometimes pointed away

When it's pointed at myself
It means I want people to see
I am the one who's righteous
Not God working through me

Do EVERYTHING for the glory of God
Everything leaves no exceptions
It means get up, live life,
Let God breathe through your mind's conceptions

What does it mean to deny yourself?
It means life isn't all about me
It's a radical surrender, a living sacrifice
Daily refusal of earthly body

Until a man is nothing
God can do nothing with him
Until a man surrenders
His only master is his sin

Everything for the glory of God
But what does everything mean?
It means in the most minute way
You submit and God can be seen

Through drinking orange juice
Or talking to a friend
Or starting up a business
Or the smile you feel within

Through praying when no one sees
And loving without conditions
And the way you shake a hand
These are all everyday missions

His glory doesn't take one form
Our God is far from that small
His glory can be revealed in ways
In ways where love stands tall

God is waiting to shine through
In the way you speak to others
In the way you hug a lost soul
Or embrace your sisters and brothers

We glorify him with our attitude
We glorify him with our intent
We glorify him with our selflessness
We glorify him in being content

Not everyone's worship will look the same
For God can be glorified in any way
As long as we are actually doing it
His name can be praised every day

How do I bring God glory?
How do I lead the lost to His feet?
Our mission is very clear
But it's easier to say than to actually complete

God says: "Just trust me."
He tells my non-submissive soul
"What's in your hand, my daughter,
Is an instrumental tool."

"What's in you hand, my child?
If you want to glorify me
Use what I've given you and
Don't be fooled into complexity."

No God, I don't think you have it right...
"Don't I need to go help orphans
And evangelize once a week?
And go to seminary school
To learn about how to help the weak?"

Don't I need to study theology
And have absolutely no doubt
Or else, someone might ask me something
I really know nothing about."

God says: "That's good but
That's not it at all
I want you to be a vessel
Not a robot, know-it-all

You just need what I've given you
And trust enough to fall
Just look to my people
Who've given me their all

Moses had a shepherd's rod
Mary had perfume
David had a sling and rock
The leper said thank you

The poor woman had two cents
And Noah built a boat
The wise man had incense
Paul boldly spoke and wrote."

Gifts and simple tools He gives
But that's all the glory He needs
Just look into your calloused hand
You'll find a way indeed

All we need to be is willing
We don't need life figured out
We need to put our trust in God
And never succumb to our doubt

God may call us far from comfort
He may call us to flee from a rut
He may want us to overcome a trial
But we are of no help if our hearts are shut

We need to look like Christ
Not mimic society
We need to take the narrow path
And cast up our anxiety

For if God is not in our hearts
Then what are we overflowing?
It's no longer rivers of life
It's merely faithless churchgoing

We should notice when He's here
We should crumble when he's gone
If we stand up straight without him
We weren't leaning to hang on

Be a leader of the faith
Even if you are struggling too
Who knows what people need to hear?
Until you let go and let God through

If God gives you wealth
Thank God and point to Him
If God places you in poverty
It doesn't mean His light's gone dim

So seek God's kingdom first
Keep your hand pointed up
Because you can never give yourself credit
When only God supplies your cup

Even the words I'm saying now
Can be said for my glory
But I want to make this clear
God supplied each word for me

This is for the glory of God
Not to boast in what I've done
I'm trying to keep my finger pointed up
Not showing off to everyone

When your hand is pointed upward
It's finally pointing the right way
For the only one we should look to
Is the one to whom we pray



Interview with Dustin Bush

We are grateful to have Dustin Bush teach music this year at GCA! Dustin teaches music for Kindergarten through 8th grade on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a high school choir that meets after school on Thursdays. We are thrilled to have you with us, Dustin!



How did you get into teaching? How did you end up at GCA?

Originally, I had plans to be a music pastor. When I was a freshman in high school, I actually applied to Evangel University. They sent me back a letter that said, “Please try again in three years.” Needless to say, I really wanted to get into the program. Three years later, I was admitted and double majored in church music and music education. I pursued certification in both vocal and instrumental, kindergarten through 12th grade. I hoped to pastor at a church and teach at a Christian school. While in college, I met my wife, got married, and worked part time at Study Middle School, and later at Weller Elementary. At these schools, I saw some ways administrators were not treating their teachers well and was turned off from teaching for a couple of years. My wife and I started to have children, and I eventually finished a degree in church music. I left the teaching profession for a few years, but never felt fulfilled in any other job. A couple of years ago, God gave me the opportunity to teach music to homeschool students with an organization called Play and Sing His Praises. Through this, I met Judy Cymbaluk, and she introduced me to Mr. Moss and GCA. Mr. Moss gave me the opportunity to work with Mr. Flores, and now to teach music.

What impact has music had on your life?

I have always had a natural ability with music. My earliest memory is from my mom recording me singing “Get Along Home, Cindy.” It was not very good. I started to show interest in music in 3rd grade, and then started band in 4th grade. I wanted to play violin, but the teacher told me that violins were not in band and I needed to pick something else. She had me try the French horn, and the rest is history. I have been playing French horn for over thirty years. I love it. It is an instrument that beats you up more than you conquer it, but it is fun. I find all the time I spend with it valuable.

Another impact of music is the connection I have with it. There is an old quote that says, “When words fail, music speaks.” This quote has been true in my life. For me, and most other Christian musicians I know, music connects us with God in a way nothing else can. The connection is more than emotional, because playing an instrument is also physical: an instrument engages your entire being. When I play an instrument in worship to God, it is exactly how I imagine heaven.

If you could control what students will remember from this school year in music, what would it be?

I would want students to remember that God created us in His image, and creativity is a part of His image. God created the planet and everything in it, including music. Music is all around us, whether it is chairs moving on the floor or frogs out in the marsh. Since we are in His image, He has created us to create—whether it is cell phones, airplanes, or symphonies. We are created to create.

Around the School



Junior high boys helping keep Oak Grove clean



Sylvie Strong taking advantage of hat day



Mrs. Loyd enjoying a bacon donut from Hurts Donuts



Left: Marissa Abulon and Silas Garrison in drama class

Right: Kindergarten field trip to Wild Animal Safari



Staff Birthdays

March

- 03/01 Larry Larsen
- 03/25 Crystal Strong
- 03/30 Luke Shawhan



April

- 04/06 Paige Steelman
- 04/07 Gil Flores
- 04/09 Terry Flores
- 04/11 Alyssa Tabor
- 04/15 James Bradley

May/June/July

- 05/19 Cayce Edney
- 06/16 Jennifer Morris
- 07/05 Renee Wilson



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Return Service Requested

<i>March 2018</i>	<i>April 2018</i>	<i>May 2018</i>
1 Tuition Due Last Day for Reenrollment discount	1 Easter Sunday Tuition Due	1 Tuition Payment Due
9 Dots and Stripes Day Last Day of the Quarter	2-6 Spring Break— No School	3 Art Show 5:00 PM
13-14 Optional Parent/ Teacher Conf 4-6pm	9-12 SAT Testing for 1st- 12th Grade	3 High School Drama Production 6:30 PM
16 Battle Grammatica	13 Etiquette Banquet	4 1st-6th Grade Spelling Bee
23 Science Fair Open House 6:30 PM	20 K4 History Day 11:00 AM Kindergarten States Celebration 2:45 PM	11 Senior Graduation 7:00 PM
30 Good Friday—No School	26 Spring Concert 7:00 PM	13 Mother's Day
		16 8th Grade Celebration, 11:30 AM
		17 Kindergarten Graduation 10:00 AM Early Out 11:30 AM Last Day of School