



WHO'S YOUR DADDY

Bible-Based Stories
Showing God As
A Father for Us All

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A Boy Set Free

David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. (1 Samuel 30:1-2)



My feet and knees were bleeding from the walk. The army that took us came when Dad and his friends were away. We had been walking for a few days now, stopping occasionally for water and a rest. After a few days' journey, we reached a city. As I looked through the fence they built to hold us, I could see them laughing and drinking, celebrating their "victory."

When they took us, they only found the mothers and children. We had no protection, no soldiers, no one. Dad told me he and his friends would be gone for only a few days, and when he got back we would have time together. He promised. Why was this happening?

At first I felt betrayed, then scared, and then I felt a darkness and anger start to fill me inside.

"Daniel," my mother said, "don't worry; your father will come for us soon." She looked down at me and smiled.

My mother was a very beautiful lady. She was kind and thoughtful. Her name was Abigail, and she loved and respected my dad; anyone could see that by the way they were together. Sometimes I would catch them looking at each other, smiling, even when Dad was in a meeting with the elders of the tribe.

I wasn't a troublesome boy, but I didn't like being played with, and because of that, some of Dad's friends thought I was too old for my age.

Slap ... I felt the blow strong and hard on my face.

"Get away from the fence, boy, before I have to clap you again."

The soldier's voice was rough and growling. My mother came up and grabbed me from behind, putting her arms around me and pulling me away from the fence.

"Leave him alone. He's done nothing wrong," she shouted.

"Keep him away from the fence." He took a step toward her.

I broke her grasp and took a step toward him, looking up at his face and staring him in the eye.

"Stop playing around," another soldier shouted. "After all, it looks like the boy would be too much a match for you."

Laughter came from a group of men standing nearby, and then the soldier said, "Mark my words, boy—I'll deal with you soon enough."

"My father is going to kick your ... hup." My mother covered my mouth with her hand before I could finish.

"Daniel," she whispered, "now is not the time."

"You better keep a leash on your boy if you want him to live to see tomorrow," the soldier said angrily.

"Oh, I'm sure he will outlive both of us," replied my mother in a very precise, direct tone, looking at him unnerved. He turned and headed back to his friends.

She bent down and held my face with both hands. "Daniel, you must try and keep that temper of yours. I don't know what I would do if anything happened to you."

"Yes, Mother. I'm sorry."

I usually sat down near the wooden fence anyway. Holding on to it with both hands, I looked at the men who had taken us captive as they walked by casually, talking and laughing as they went.

I could remember how I used to feel, carefree with my brothers and sisters playing in the fields near what used to be our camp, now just a collection of burned-down tents and huts—the place we called home.

Father had left a few days before we were attacked. He promised us that when he came back, he would bring fine linen, gold, cattle, and sheep. Father usually kept his promises.

What happened now? Where was his army? Had they forgotten us? Were they attacked and killed before we were captured? All these questions kept running through my mind, and then I asked myself, "Did my dad ever love me in the first place?"

My thoughts were shaken by loud shouting by the guards. Soldiers were running backward and forward, as if they were confused.

"What's going on?" I heard a soldier ask nervously.

"It's David," another shouted. "David's army is coming."

David's army is coming—the words rang in my heart. Dad's coming. My father is coming. At that moment a feeling of peace and relief swept over me, followed by guilt and shame.

My father was fighting to save us. My mother told me not to lose heart, but there I was, thinking my dad didn't want me. I felt like I had let him down. The noise grew louder and louder. The sound of fighting increased as it got nearer to us.

And then I felt a large hand grab the back of my shirt, pick me up, and throw me into a clearing. I landed on my back and felt my right shoulder bang with pain as it took the brunt of the fall.

"I told you, boy, that you wouldn't live long." It was the soldier I had stood up to. "If I can't kill David then I guess his son will have to do."

His sword was drawn, and there was a big grin on his face as he walked toward me. Using my feet, I began to push myself backward, wriggling my back as I tried to get away.

My heart began to race. I wanted to cry out for help, but nothing would come from my throat. And then, as if he was right there beside me, I heard my father's voice.

"Daniel, remember the story of how I killed a lion when I was just a bit older than you?"

Then the story I heard so many times came back to me. My dad told us of a time when he used to tend sheep. When he was a lad, he was attacked by a lion. As a shepherd, the two things he carried as weapons were a sling and a staff.

When the lion came to take a sheep, he held his staff with both hands, pointing it to him. Not teasing, he kept his eye on it and then knelt down, slowly laying the staff low to the ground. Then, when the lion pounced on him, he lifted the staff with the end set firmly in the ground for support and aimed the top of the staff into the lion's mouth.

He told us how he felt the breath of the lion as it fell into his staff. "Always keep your nerve," he would tell us. "There's nothing wrong with being afraid, but when you keep your nerve, you will know how to act."

I slowed my breathing and tried to focus. What was around me that I could use to defend myself? The soldier was coming closer. Just then I felt soft sand beneath my hands.

I grabbed a handful and stopped kicking. The sand was making it difficult to move, and I wanted to reserve my strength.

“I’ve got you now, boy,” he said, grinning, and raised his sword above his head.

“Not today,” I shouted and threw the sand straight into his face. It blinded his eyes, and I threw some more. He started swinging wildly; I dodged each strike as his sword hit the ground.

We came on horseback to the top of the ridge overlooking the camp. Joab had taken most of the men and attacked the site. As I looked over the fighting, I could see the women and children behind the fences. What was their prison had become their protection. Then I saw him; my son, my boy.

“My lord. Daniel.”

“I know—I see him.”

At first my heart froze. My boy was on his back fighting a giant of a man with nothing but a handful of sand. Now where had I seen this before? I smiled and turned to my guard.

“Bow.”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Arrow.”

The small group of men with me were silent but eager to join the fray.

“Steady, boy, steady.” Even my horse was anxious to get down to the battle.

I pulled back the arrow on the string, raising the bow through the line of soldiers fighting. The man’s arm was raised, as if to land a final blow, and then I saw it—a gap, right in the shoulder blade.

Twang.

I prepared myself to shift, then, *thud*. The soldier held his right shoulder and gave out a shout of pain, “Arrrrrr.” When he turned, I could see an arrow sticking out of his back.

“Leave him and come on,” another soldier shouted. “It’s not worth it; if we stay any longer then we all die.” The soldier grabbed his wounded friend and both took off, running into the dusty wind. When they left, I sighed with

relief. I felt so tired and drained. There was no energy left for me to stand. My eyes closed as I fell into darkness.

I awoke to the sounds of friends and family being united. There was crying and laughing. Children and women were finding their fathers, husbands, brothers, and friends.

"He's awake." It was the voice of my mother. "We were worried about you. Are you okay?" I looked at her, gave a little smile, and nodded my head. "My little soldier," she said. "I'm so proud of you."

With her help I was able to get up and stand on my feet. Then, looking up I saw him. My dad was surrounded by my relatives and friends. "Come on, Daniel," my brother called out. "Dad's here, he's here." I tried to look at him, but I couldn't raise my head. I wanted to, but I squeezed my eyes closed tight, fighting back the tears. I felt so ashamed that I couldn't go to him.

"Daniel," my father, said walking toward me. "What's wrong, boy?"

I could sense the concern in his voice. "I thought you weren't coming back." My eyes were closed; I still couldn't get myself to look at him. "I haven't been a good son. I'm sorry, Father. I'm sorry."

Then Dad got down on one knee, and I felt his hand on my shoulder. "Daniel, listen to me. I love you, I love all my family, but the thing is, of all the children, I knew you could take care of yourself and your mother."

I raised my head and looked at him with a relaxed smile. "I'm so proud of you, and I came back for all my family. After all, whose arrow do you think hit that soldier in his back?"

I gasped, my mouth open. "You saw me?"

"Of course I did, and from a distance I could see all you boys. But you were the only one fighting a soldier. In fact, you kind of reminded me ... of me."

Then Dad said with a smile, "I didn't save you from that Goliath. I saved him from you."

"Oh Dad." I threw my arms around his neck, buried my head on his shoulder, and held him tight.

"After all," he said,

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Part 3

Fathers

Have you ever been at a place in your life where you knew you were called to do something, but you just didn't know what it was? Like you were trying to find yourself, like Stephen?

Have you ever had the best sincere intentions, only to realize that you were sincerely wrong, like Simon the Zealot or Apollos?

Have you ever been in a situation where you were put to the test on God's Word and it seemed the next step was either do or die, like Naaman?

First John 2:14 says, "I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, *fathers*, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

The following stories are about everyday men ranging from young to elderly and how they managed to get through difficult (and for some) death-defying circumstances and situations.

They found new faith, hope, and love, and as they went through their experiences and as you read their stories, it is my hope that you will see how they were able to answer one simple question:

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Blessed

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples' rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there. (Matthew 19:13-15)



“Nnnnnnnoooooooooooo.”

She was my goddaughter, but the girl was driving me crazy.

“No, no, no. I don’t want to take a bath.”

This must be the new word for the week. Anything we said, she said no.

“Elizabeth, come here, child.”

“Noooo.”

“Elizabeth, it’s time for supper.”

“Noooo.”

“Elizabeth, it’s time to go home.”

“Noooo.”

Mind you, if you thought you were losing your hearing, she confirmed you weren’t. And if you thought you needed more exercise in your life—well, let’s just say she was the one who made sure you got it. Her mother was on her own a lot as her husband was a fisherman. Most days he was out early and came in late. There were also the times when her mother, Margaret, had to work odd jobs to help make ends meet.

Martha and I were next-door neighbors of Elizabeth’s. We were both retired and had grown attached to the young couple. We did have children of our own, but they were grown and lived in other townships. I guess as people go, we were near, dependable, but most of all we seemed to have the same kind

of spirit. We believed the same kind of things, had similar interests, and loved the area we lived in.

“Lucas.”

“Yes, dear.”

“I have an idea. Why don’t we take Elizabeth for a walk in the market? I need to get some things for the house, and it’s a lovely day outside.”

She looked at me and smiled. As women go, she was a beauty. Martha was a lady who grew graceful with age.

“Would you like to go to the market, Elizabeth?” she asked, smiling at the little girl.

“Yesssssss,” Elizabeth said, smiling.

I shook my head in amazement. “The girl’s a con artist,” I cried out to Martha.

“What on earth are you talking about, Lucas? I asked Elizabeth if she would like to go to the market, and she said yes. What’s wrong with that?”

I looked at the little girl and grumbled under my breath. Can you imagine? Everything I say I get a no, and here comes wonder woman, and with one request she gets a smiling yes.

“Well, you can carry her?” I said, feeling grumpy.

“Oh, Elizabeth, I think we have an old grouchy in the house,” Martha said, smiling wide-eyed to the little girl. Elizabeth just giggled in reply.

The market was a busy place. Vendors lined the streets selling clothes, pots, fruits and vegetables, and jewelry.

“Lucas, can you hold on to Elizabeth? I’m just going to look at these materials.”

“Wait, me hold her—why can’t she go with you?”

“She’s your goddaughter, for goodness’ sake. You’re like sixty plus, and she is just two. You mean to say you can’t manage a little girl you have at least sixty years over?”

When she put it like that, it did sound ridiculous. But this child had another spirit in her.

“Now, Elizabeth, you be a nice little girl, and don’t give Uncle Lucas any trouble, okay, sweetheart?”

“Yesss, auntie.”

“Lucas.”

"Yes, dear."

"Behave."

"Me—you're telling me!"

Martha shook her head with a little smile and left us standing.

"Okay then. Let's go and look at the pool." Elizabeth didn't say anything, so I took that to be a good sign.

I carried her and walked through the market till we reached the center. In the market center a little children's pool had been built, and on hot days the neighbors brought water from a nearby spring for children to wade their feet in.

I took off Elizabeth's slippers, and she was happy to go in. *Well, so far so good*, I thought.

After a short time, she found playmates, and they were playing and walking around together in the shallow water. The way children made friends seemed so easy. I got to thinking, if people could make friends so easily, then maybe the world would be a better place to live in.

"Okay, Elizabeth, it's time to go."

"Nooooooooo."

Some of the mothers started to look at me with a look I thought said, "I wonder if he knows what he's doing."

"Elizabeth, baby, come now, honey. It's time to go and find Auntie."

"Nooooooooo." The cry of resistance again.

Then I heard some mothers talking.

"Have you heard?"

"No, what?"

"Jesus, the healer; He's coming to our town."

"I heard He heals the sick and lame."

"Yes, and preaches the good news to the people," said another woman.

"I heard He's not like the priests or the Pharisees."

"I know; Jesus cares for people."

"I have an idea," another mother volunteered "Let's take our children to Him to be blessed. He loves little children."

"That's a wonderful idea."

One by one the women started to collect their children from the pool.

“Elizabeth.”

“Nooooooooo.”

“Sorry, baby, but not today.” I went in and picked her up. “You’re going to get your blessing, even if I have to carry you there myself.”

I gave her a stern look, and she calmed down and rested her head on my shoulder. After a short while we found Martha.

“Martha.”

“Yes dear, is everything all right?”

“I just heard the Master, the one called Jesus, is coming to our town, and some of the women are carrying their children to be blessed.”

“And ...?”

“And I want my goddaughter to get her blessing.”

“Well, since you’re so keen on it, let’s go.”

We started off, and then I stopped.

“What’s wrong?” Martha asked.

“I know receiving a blessing is a good thing, and I don’t think Margaret would object, but don’t you think we should ask her permission first?”

“Lucas, you’re right; as her mother, she should have her say in this.”

I looked at Elizabeth, and as she looked at me, it was as if she could tell we were in a predicament.

“We have to find her,” I said. “Where did she say she would be working today?”

“I think she said she would be at the potter’s house painting vases.”

“Well then come on, woman, let’s go.”

“My, my Lucas; I swear if anyone saw the look on your face they would believe Elizabeth was your daughter.”

I looked at Elizabeth and smiled, and then she smiled back.

“We’re going to see Mommy. Yes!”

“Yes” she replied.

We found Margaret and told her the plan.

“Of course, of course she can get blessed.”

“Can you take a break and come?” asked Martha.

“I wouldn’t miss it for the world,” she said, smiling.

When we got to the place where Jesus was sitting, there was a group of women ahead of us. We were just in time to hear His followers speaking to them.

"The Master is tired. We're sorry, ladies, but the Master can't spend time for little children. He has too much to do."

I could see the disappointment on their faces as they turned away.

"We're too late," said Margaret.

"Lucas."

"Yes, Martha."

"I'm sorry. I know you had your heart set on Elizabeth being blessed, but maybe it wasn't meant to be. Maybe another time; let's go home."

We were about to turn when I noticed Jesus talking to His followers.

"No wait, hold on a minute."

"What is it?" asked Martha.

"I don't know, but just hold on a minute."

Then we heard Jesus say, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

"Here, Margaret, you take her. You go with her, Martha."

"Aren't you coming?" asked Margaret. "If it wasn't for you, we wouldn't be here."

"No, it's fine, you go. Go on, and I'll wait for you here."

She smiled and kissed me on the cheek; then she and Martha went and joined the women.

"And what's your name?" asked Jesus.

"Isbeth," Elizabeth said, smiling happily.

"And who brought you here today, 'Isbeth'?" Jesus asked, smiling.

Then a funny thing happened. Elizabeth turned and looked and kept looking through the crowd. The women, realizing she was trying to look through them, stepped aside to give her a clear way.

Then she looked at me, pointed her finger, and said, "Unca Luuuu."

"Do you love your Unca Luuuu?" He asked.

"Yessssss," she said, nodding her head.

Then He smiled, touched her head, and said, "Bless you, My child."

That evening as we got home, Elizabeth was sleeping on her mother's shoulder. We talked a bit about the day and were about to say our good-byes.

“You know, you did a good thing today,” said Margaret. “I know you love this little girl; that’s why we asked you both to be godparents.” Then she looked at her sleeping daughter. “Elizabeth, you do have a father.” Then she held my hand and said, “But ...

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