

Waiting for things to get better

**Bible References:**

1 Samuel 16:1-13; 14-23; 17:1-54; 18:1-9;

19:1-3; 23:7-8; 24:1-14;

Psalm 5

In Session Three we follow David's journey from the royal court to a cave in the wilderness. Anointed to become Israel's future king, David seemed to have everything going for him until King Saul turned against him. Forced to spend years on the run, David waited for God to fulfil his promise. Although David longed for things to get better, his time in the wilderness taught him to trust God even in the most difficult circumstances. In this session we'll discover what David's story can teach us about waiting faithfully when life doesn't turn out as we expected.

You will need:

- 'Waiting for Things to Get Better' handout
- Coloured pens and highlighters



Beat

Ask:

What feelings immediately come to mind when you think about going into a cave?

Watch:

Caves You Must See – Most Amazing Caves in the World (8:10)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiNQPfIRTck

(If time is limited, start the clip at 3:10 to watch the top five caves only.)

Ask:

- Which cave would you most like to visit? Why?
- Which cave would you least like to visit? Why?

Say:

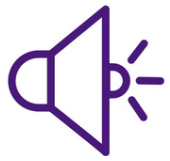
Caves can feel dark, isolated and even dangerous. Yet, as we've seen, they can also be places of incredible beauty. David spent part of his life hiding in a cave while he waited for things to get better. Today we'll discover what his experience can teach us about trusting God while we wait for life to get better.



Bridge

Ask:

Leader's notes: Discuss whether there are any caves in your local area that the young people could visit with family, friends or as a group. Visiting a cave may help them gain a fresh perspective on David's experience.



Amplify

Leader's notes:

Give each member of the group a 'Waiting for Things to Get Better' handout. There are several Bible passages to cover, but the aim is to skim-read each one and summarise the main events as you trace David's journey. Use the additional notes below to help guide the discussion as you work through the handout.

1 Samuel 16:1-13 – Samuel anoints David

God had rejected King Saul and chosen David to be the future king of Israel. When Samuel visited Jesse, David wasn't even invited to meet him because he was out looking after the sheep. God reminded Samuel that he doesn't judge people by their appearance, but by their hearts.

'People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.' (1 Samuel 16:7)

Although David was anointed as the future king, he would have to wait many years before God's promise became a reality.

1 Samuel 16:14-23 – David enters Saul's service

David was taken from his father's fields to serve in King Saul's court, where he played music to soothe Saul whenever he was troubled.

'Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.' (1 Samuel 16:22)

At this stage, everything seemed to be falling into place

1 Samuel 17:1-54 – David and Goliath

Rather than reading this passage in full, summarise the story together. With God's help, David defeated Goliath, and his courage became known throughout Israel.

1 Samuel 18:1-7 – David’s success**Ask:**

Up to this point, how were things going for David?

David was successful in battle, respected by the people and building close relationships within the royal family. It looked as though God’s plan was unfolding exactly as expected.

1 Samuel 18:8-9; 19:1-3; 23:7-8 – The tide turns

King Saul became jealous of David’s success and began trying to kill him. Instead of becoming king, David found himself running for his life.

Ask:

The handout asks, ‘What’s on David’s mind?’ What questions do you think David might have been asking God?

Leader’s notes:

Examples might include:

- Why is this happening when I’ve only ever done what God asked?
- When will this be over?
- Will I ever become king?
- Did I misunderstand what God wanted for my life?

Say:

David had been chosen to become Israel’s future king, but instead he found himself running for his life. Everything that had once seemed so promising now seemed to be falling apart. David was on the run, trudging through the wilderness and waiting for things to get better.



Bridge

Ask:

If you had been David, what do you think would have been going through your mind as you fled into the wilderness?



Sound Check

Leader's notes:

Watch the following clip together. As you watch, think about the impact David's time in the wilderness had on his faith and how it prepared him for the future.

Watch:

Where David Hid From Saul – Cave in the Judean Wilderness – The Holy Land – Season 2 – Episode 2 (9:07)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYQ-AeHCdgQ

Leader's notes:

Return to the final section of the handout. Encourage the group to discuss and jot down their responses to the question: What happened in the cave at En Gedi?

Ask:

- How do you relate to the quote: 'The truth is that when the Lord takes you into the wilderness, you do not come out the same person'?
- In what ways have you, or others, been through a wilderness experience that has changed them?

Say:

David's brother Eliab spoke harshly to him just before his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:28), accusing him of being proud and criticising his motives.

Ask:

- When we are in times of wilderness, how do hurtful comments from the past impact our ability to stay focused on God's purpose for our lives?
- Is this even harder when things aren't going well, and if so, in what way?

Say:

David spent nearly ten years in exile, on the run, waiting for things to get better. Imagine how tempting it must have been to bring that waiting to an end.

Ask:

- In his position, what would you have been tempted to do as you hid in the cave?
- Why is it so hard to continue following God's path when it feels like things are never going to get better?
- What do you think God can teach us through times in the wilderness?

Leader's notes:

Refer back to the handout and encourage the group to discuss and jot down their responses to the question: What can we learn from David when it feels like things are never going to get better?

**Bridge****What is your response to the following quote?**

'If the Lord Jehovah makes us wait, let us do so with our whole hearts; for blessed are all they that wait for him. He is worth waiting for. The waiting itself is beneficial to us: it tries faith, exercises patience, trains submission, and endears the blessing when it comes. The Lord's people have always been a waiting people.'

- Charles Spurgeon



Selah

Leader's notes:

Many people believe David wrote Psalm 57 while he was hiding in a cave, waiting for things to get better. As you listen to the psalm, notice how David continues to trust God even though his circumstances haven't changed. Jot down any words and phrases that stand out to you on your handout.

Watch:

Psalm 57 – English Standard Version (ESV) (1:57)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qolmwgZOZMs

Ask:

What does this psalm teach us about trusting God while we're waiting for things to get better?

Leader's notes:

Invite the group to spend a few moments in silence, thinking about an area of their own lives where they are waiting for things to get better. Encourage them to ask God to help them trust him, just as David did in the wilderness. Close by praying together.





Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is one thing David's story has taught you about waiting?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.



Handout

'WAITING FOR
THINGS TO GET
BETTER'

1 SAMUEL 18:1-17

1 SAMUEL 17:1-54

1 SAMUEL 18:8-9, 19:1-3, 23:7-8

1 SAMUEL 16:14-23

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

WHAT IS ON DAVID'S MIND?

Psalms 57

What happened in the cave at En Gedi?

What can we learn from David
when it feels like things are
never going to get better?