

Study Guide

The God Story Week 4: The Inciting Incident

By Jacob Armstrong

Key Verse

*“So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him right there in front of his brothers.
The LORD’s spirit came over David from that point forward.”* 1 Samuel 16:13

Summary

When Samuel anoints David to be the next king, David is given a better story. David is thrust into the story. He had little choice in the matter. When Samuel shows up at your house, looks at your seven older brothers, and then sends for you and pours oil over your head and says, “You will be king when you are not from the family of the king,” you have stepped into a new story. And if you allow it, it will be a better story.

David was unsuspecting, undeserving, caught by surprise, but chosen by God.

This is our Thread #4 that we see all throughout the story: *God calls the unlikely and gives them a better story.*

Session Goals

- **Explore ways we might feel undeserving or unlikely to have had a part in God’s story, so that we can embrace the better story God has given us;**
- **Consider who we might have considered “unlikely” to be given a better story and discern ways we can invite them into the story, and**
- **Realize that when we find ourselves living a story that is less than the one God is calling us to, we can seek forgiveness and choose to live into the God Story for us again.**

Discussion Starter

Invite participants to reflect on and share Inciting Incidents where everything changed for them. Can anyone pinpoint the moment that they became a part of God’s story?

Read & Discuss

1 Corinthians 1:25-31

God calls into a better story people that seems unlikely or undeserving. Some of us here might at times feel this way about our part in the God Story. This Scripture can help us see that God calls us as we are, to show God's great strength in us. We don't have to feel confident about our own worthiness but can “boast in the Lord” or as Day 5 in the devotional tells us, “God did it!”

Acts 10:44-46

The first Christians were Jews, and they were surprised when God called the Gentiles into his story. Can you think of other biblical examples of unlikely people joining the God Story? Have you seen someone become a part of God’s story that was a surprise to you? Is there someone or a group of people that you just can’t see

becoming a part of a better story? Let's try to pray for those people specifically, knowing those are just who God might be calling.

2 Samuel 11–12

Summarize these chapters, reminding the group of how off track David found himself. David was living in a way that was not worthy of the story God had called him to. He came to a place of brokenness about that sin after realizing how far he had strayed, and then he turned back to God. What was more important—his initial acceptance of God's better story or his humbling himself to repent and enter back in after falling?

Further questions:

When David was anointed as king it was a moment he would never forget. It was an Inciting Incident, a day when everything changed in his life.

David's life, though, would not be one glorious moment after another. He would encounter other Inciting Incidents that would leave him full of pain and regret. In other words, David made some serious mistakes. In one part of his story, David becomes an adulterer, a murderer, and a liar. His sin is exposed and his life is changed forever. David's son then dies, and David would have had every reason to just throw in the towel. Sure, years before God had promised greatness for David, but that was before he squandered it all away. But instead of growing bitter or hardened, David has a different reaction to his newfound situation. He is broken. Utterly and totally broken. Instead of running away from God he runs to God. He pleads with God:

*Please don't throw me out of your presence;
please don't take your holy spirit away from me.* Psalm 51:11

He begs God:

*Return the joy of your salvation to me and
sustain me with a willing spirit.* Psalm 51:12

He renews his promise to serve God:

*Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways,
and sinners will come back to you.* Psalm 51:13

David shows us that even when we have broken our promises to God, God is steadfast in God's promises to us. We turn to God and God has already turned to us.

God has a better story for us.

Psalm 51 is David's prayer of confession to God after his sin has been brought out into the open. Confession is a way of stepping back into God's better story for you. What do you need to confess to God today?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for being present with me at all times. You have been with me in every life-changing moment, and I know you are here with me today. Help me to look for you in my story. Help me to hear how you are calling me into your story. In Jesus' name. Amen.