

THE PRIZE: Under Pressure

Session 4 – Handling Success

Leader’s Guide

Featuring Cacau and King David

DVD – 9:37 to 12:52

WARM-UP

Share with your group one thing you have accomplished in life that gave you a sense of achievement. How did it make you feel?

TEAM HUDDLE

In your group, briefly discuss some of the successes Cacau identifies in his life and career.

These include winning the Bundesliga title with Stuttgart, being celebrated by 200,000 people, gaining dual citizenship, comfortable family life, being called up to play for Germany, playing in the 2010 World Cup, winning a third place medal at the same World Cup.

These things have clearly been a blessing to his life, but what might be some of the dangers of success? What temptations might someone in Cacau’s position face in living out his/her faith in Jesus? What threats might there be to his/her character?

COACH’S CORNER

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5

Then all the tribes of Israel went to David at Hebron and told him, “We are your own flesh and blood. ²In the past, when Saul was our king, you were the one who really led the forces of Israel. And the Lord told you, ‘You will be the shepherd of my people Israel. You will be Israel’s leader.’”

³So there at Hebron, King David made a covenant before the Lord with all the elders of Israel. And they anointed him king of Israel.

⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in all. ⁵He had reigned over Judah from Hebron for seven years and six months, and from Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.

From this passage can you identify some of David’s achievements?

He was considered to be the real leader of the army and the one who had brought Israel success in battle (vs. 2); he had a clear call from God to lead, which was confirmed by others (vs. 2); he was anointed as king and would reign for 40 years (vs. 3 and 4); he united the nation (vs. 5); and he had the trust and admiration of his people (vs. 1 -2).

Despite these successes David didn’t let success go to his head.

Read 2 Samuel 5:11-12, 18-25

¹¹Then King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar timber and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built David a palace. ¹²And David realized that the Lord had confirmed him as king over Israel and had blessed his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹⁸ The Philistines arrived and spread out across the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹ So David asked the LORD, “Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?”

The LORD replied to David, “Yes, go ahead. I will certainly hand them over to you.”

²⁰ So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. “The LORD did it!” David exclaimed. “He burst through my enemies like a raging flood!” So he named that place Baal-perazim (which means “the Lord who bursts through”). ²¹ The Philistines had abandoned their idols there, so David and his men confiscated them.

²² But after a while the Philistines returned and again spread out across the valley of Rephaim. ²³ And again David asked the LORD what to do. “Do not attack them straight on,” the LORD replied. “Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar^[a] trees. ²⁴ When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, be on the alert! That will be the signal that the LORD is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army.” ²⁵ So David did what the LORD commanded, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

What does this passage tell us about how David was able to make sure success didn't go to his head? Who or what does he identify as the source of his success?

David knew that his success came from God, that it wasn't primarily a result of his own efforts but was a result of what God had done for him (vs. 12, vs. 20) The passage also makes it clear that David listened to God before taking action and then was obedient to God's instructions (vs. 18, 23-25).

Do you find it easier to focus on God and to trust and rely on Him when life is going well, or when you are going through difficulties? Share your experiences with the group.

How do you think God measures success in our lives? What do you think He is looking for?

Look at the following passages to see how they define success:

Depending on the size of the group, you may decide to split into smaller groups and give each group one passage to look up and report back on. Depending on levels of biblical literacy in your groups, you may consider inviting the group to think of other passages that help answer this question.

When King David was about to die, he gave his son, Solomon, the following advice: *“...Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all His ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go...”* (1 Kings 2:3)

“My child, never forget the things I have taught you.

Store my commands in your heart.

² If you do this, you will live many years,

and your life will be satisfying.

³ Never let loyalty and kindness leave you!

Tie them around your neck as a reminder.

Write them deep within your heart.

⁴ Then you will find favor with both God and people,

and you will earn a good reputation.” (Proverbs 3:1-4)

“And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” (Galatians 5:22-23)

WARM-DOWN

Spend time thanking God for any successes you have enjoyed in life. Invite the Holy Spirit to convict you of any areas in your life where you have attempted to rob God of His glory and tried to take the glory for yourself. Be assured that, *“But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.”* (1 John 1:9). Ask God to help you stay humble and to constantly remember that any success you enjoy in life is a gift from God.

EXTRA TRAINING

Memory Verse

“...Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all His ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go...” (1 Kings 2:3)

Prayer/Worship Focus

Find a place during this week where you can be quiet and bring before God your hopes, dreams, ambitions and your fears. Spend time thanking God for any ‘successes’ you have enjoyed, however small you might think they have been. Then spend time reading Psalm 27, identifying all the truths about God. Like David, who wrote this Psalm, focus on your desire for a close, intimate relationship with God, whatever your circumstances¹.

Putting it into Practice

When something good happens, how do you usually respond? This week, get your focus right – practice thanking and praising God when good things happen, before you do anything else. And if you have decisions to make, follow David’s example, don’t trust in your past success or your own understanding, but seek God’s advice first (Proverbs 3:5-6).

¹ David – After God’s Heart, Elizabeth McQuoid, Spring Harvest, 2003