

The Bible can be a dangerous book in two ways:

It can be cut off from the complications of its origins and intentions and used, abused to say what we want it to mean so that we can coerce and control others.

Or it can be allowed to challenge our simplistic and self-interested views of life and the world and make us bigger, and part of something bigger.

The danger of heroes. We are fascinated with them and can be inspired by them, and conclude that we are NOT LIKE THEM.

The Bible has a strange interest in making its heroes NORMAL human, rather than SUPER human.

Why? There are many heroes in the 66 books that make up the Bible, here are 3 heroes that help us understand them all.

Jephthah, a 'judge' over tribal Israel. His story is found in Judges chapters 11 & 12.

Jephthah makes a vow to Yahweh (Judges 11.30-35) that he was not asked to take but chooses himself. He was victorious in battle, but defeated in life!

Jephthah's heroism was mixed with TRAGEDY.

David, Israel's greatest king. His story is found in 1st and 2nd Samuel. We are focusing on 2 Samuel chapters 11 & 12.

David desired Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. So he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle so he could take her. After which the prophet Nathan confronts David with what he had done by telling him a story. Psalm 51 is the expression of David's regret and the stumbling block he set between himself and his people, and Yahweh, and his own self-respect.

David's wrong could have been hidden to preserve his heroism, but Israel told the story to remind us he was HUMAN.

Simon Peter, the super disciple of Jesus. His story is throughout the 4 Gospels & Acts. Focus here is Matthew chapters 14 & 16.

Simon distinguished himself as a super disciple by not hesitating to claim Jesus as 'the messiah and the living son of God' when others were confused and afraid. For this Jesus changed his name to Peter, which means "rock" saying that upon rocks like him the church will be built. But just earlier Peter had tried to step out on the water to come to Jesus, but the wind and waves distracted him and he sank, like a rock!

Jesus renamed Simon as Peter, meaning ROCK.

The Bible goes on to show hero Peter to be a rock that BUILDS and also a rock that SINKS.

Heroes aren't perfect, they are PEOPLE.

Being imperfect isn't your problem. Thinking that there is NO HERO IN YOU is!

HOMEWORK: Here are 5 Bible readings you can spend time with this week.

Try out **S.O.A.P.** Select part of the reading to focus on. Then **Observe**, read again, make notes. Next **Apply** what you found to your life or our world. Finally, **Prayfully** sit with the reading and your thoughts.

1) Judges 11.1-11, 27-40 2) 2 Samuel 11 & 12.1-15 3) Psalm 51 4) Matthew 14.22-33 & 16.13-20 5) Ezekiel 37.1-14