

Triggered

But Jezebel his wife came to him [Ahab], and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?" He said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you another vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" 1 Kings 21:5-7

We use the term "triggered" when something in the present is bringing up material that belongs in our past experiences. Dr. Karl has helped me understand that when I am triggered 1) I feel upset; 2) I don't act my age; 3) I'm not my "True Self." Someone asked, "Where is this in the Bible?" While I can't point to a clear doctrinal statement, I can make pretty good guesses of triggered people by seeing what appears to be triggered behavior. Because the material that comes forward is often from wounds, sin, and lies in our past, it is easier to look at a Biblical figure about whom we have some detail of his/her childhood. This is not a case of dismissing a person's failures or their need for forgiveness, just a look at the presence of triggering.

Studies included in this article are: Triggered David; Triggered Samuel; Triggered Ahab; Triggered Peter; Triggered Solomon; Triggered Thomas; Triggered Elijah

David

☑ David lusts after Bathsheba. Although he had other wives at the time, he pursued her even to the plot to kill her husband, Uriah. Was he triggered? He doesn't seem to be his True Self in this episode of his life. Is he "looking for love in all the wrong places"? Is he triggered to childhood experiences where his father seemed to not show primary interest in him? Did he have attachment wounds that left him with unmet needs for attention, acceptance and attunement?

1 Samuel 16:11 And Samuel said to [Jesse](#), "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to [Jesse](#), "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."

☑ Or could it be that Jesse, as an older man, couldn't give David the attention he needed?

1 Samuel 17:12 Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name *was* [Jesse](#), and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced *in years*, in the days of Saul.

☑ One of Saul's servants saw how exceptional David was and recommended him to Saul. Saul then asked that David be sent to his camp. It is possible that Jesse still didn't see David's full value and therefore sent him with supplies.

1 Samuel 16:18-20 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of [Jesse](#) the Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD *is* with him." Therefore Saul sent messengers to [Jesse](#), and said, "Send

me your son David, who *is* with the sheep." And [Jesse](#) took a donkey *loaded with* bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent *them* by his son David to Saul.

- ☑ David had proven his courage and warring abilities while acknowledging the source of his victories. But his father didn't seem to acknowledge David.

1 Samuel 17:34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a [lion](#) or a [bear](#) came and took a lamb out of the flock."

1 Samuel 17:36 "Your servant has killed both [lion](#) and [bear](#); and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God."

1 Samuel 17:37 Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the [lion](#) and from the paw of the [bear](#), He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- ☑ Saul accepted and praised David asking if Jesse would let David stay.

1 Samuel 16:22 Then Saul sent to [Jesse](#), saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight."

- ☑ Jesse responded by sending David with supplies to his three older brothers.

1 Samuel 17:13, 17-18 The three oldest sons of [Jesse](#) had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah...Then [Jesse](#) said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp." ""And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them."

- ☑ Did his brothers add to the problem by the way they treated David? Did they treat him that way because they saw Jesse treat him?

1 Samuel 17:22, 28-30 And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers...Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." And David said, "What have I done now? *Is there* not a cause?" Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones *did*.

- ☑ David wasn't a little boy when this happened. He was old enough to be interested in the king's daughter.

1 Samuel 17:25 So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption *from taxes* in Israel."

Samuel

☑ Samuel was given to the Lord and left with the High Priest Eli at the tabernacle in Shiloh when he was weaned- at the age of 2 or 3 years old, maybe as old as five. Did he suffer attachment trauma? Possible. If he did, do we see the results of triggering in the inappropriate grieving over Saul?

1 Samuel 15:35 And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

1 Samuel 16:1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

☑ Additionally, Samuel was a great prophet but failed as a father. Both of his sons were ungodly. What did triggering have to do with this failure? I can't say for sure, but it is interesting that Samuel grew up with the High Priest, Eli, who also failed as a father in the same way.

1 Samuel 8:1-3 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were* judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

1 Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli *were* corrupt; they did not know the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Ahab

☑ Ahab, an evil man to begin with, acts here with child maturity. He is able to articulate what he wants, but incapable of getting it or understanding what another person outside of himself feels. His disappointment completely devastates him and reduces him to act like a child. While we don't know details of his childhood, we can clearly see evidence of triggering.

1 Kings 21:1-2 And it came to pass after these things *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which *was* in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it *is* near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. *Or*, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money."

1 Kings 21:4 So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food."

1 Kings 21:5-7 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?" He said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you *another* vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

1 Kings 21:15-16 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the [vineyard](#) of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the [vineyard](#) of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Peter

☑ Peter denies Jesus three times just as Jesus had told him that Peter would. Peter had earlier vowed on two different occasions to die rather than deny him. He also took his sword and cut off the right ear of the High Priest's servant fearlessly in the presence of the Temple troops. What made him deny Jesus and to a servant girl at that? Where did the fear come from? My suggestion is something triggered him.

John 11:16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days."

Mark 14:31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to [die with You](#), I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.

John 18:10-11 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

Matthew 26:34-35 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will [deny Me](#) three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to [die with You](#), I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples." Cp. Mark 14:30

Matthew 26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will [deny Me](#) three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Mark 14:72 A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will [deny Me](#) three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will [deny Me](#) three times."

John 18:17-18 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

John 18:25-27 Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?" He denied *it* and said, "I am not!" One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

☑ Characteristically, Jesus does not turn away from Peter. He knows what is happening inside of Peter and where it is coming from. Jesus revealed and healed by questioning Peter three times. “Do you love Me?” Somehow that was the root issue.

John 21:15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

☑ Triggering often brings condemnation and despair over our behavior which doesn't fit with who we really are. Here Jesus deals with the fall out of Peter's triggered behavior with love and understanding. He helps Peter grow in self-awareness and acceptance.

John 21:17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

Solomon

☑ Solomon, David's son, have 700 wives and 300 concubines. Although many wives and concubines meant power and virility, why did the wisest man who ever lived have so many? Generational sin is obviously in the mix, but 1,000 women? More than that, these women influenced him to go after other gods and to allow places of worship in Israel after several warnings from God not to do that. Was Solomon triggered by a sense of loneliness or worthlessness or dissatisfaction from attachment wounds? It is very possible that his father was so distracted with the pressures of being King, father to many children and husband to several wives that Solomon never developed a secure attachment.

2 Chronicles 1:11-12 And God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

1 Kings 11:3-4 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of his father David.

1 Kings 11:8-10 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded.

2 Samuel 2:2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

2 Samuel 3:2-4 Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

2 Samuel 5:13-16 And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. Now these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhaz, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

Thomas

Thomas, the Twin, who switched from believing in Messiah enough to die with Him to not believing that He was alive and resurrected. What caused the puzzling and dramatic change? Could triggering have brought something back from his past that challenged him and caused him to doubt?

John 11:16 Then [Thomas](#), who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

John 20:24-28 Now [Thomas](#), called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and [Thomas](#) with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you! Then He said to [Thomas](#), "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And [Thomas](#) answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Elijah

Elijah believed God for no rain and then rain, for provision, for fire to destroy the wet sacrifice, for victory over the prophets of Baal. Then he ran scared (and depressed) when Jezebel threatened him. What happened? His behavior appears triggered to some unresolved overwhelming place in his past. He feels alone and unprotected.

No Rain For Three Years

1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "*As* the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor [rain](#) these years, except at my word."

1 Kings 17:7 And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no [rain](#) in the land.

Two Kinds of Provision

1 Kings 17:4, 6 And it will be *that* you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the [ravens](#) to feed you there...The [ravens](#) brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

1 Kings 17:14, 16 For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends [rain](#) on the earth.'...The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

Rain Released

1 Kings 18:1-2 And it came to pass *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send [rain](#) on the earth." So [Elijah](#) went to present himself to Ahab; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria.

1 Kings 18:45 Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.

Fire From Heaven Consumes The Sacrifice

1 Kings 18:32 Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.

1 Kings 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

Defeats The Prophets of Baal

1 Kings 18:40 And [Elijah](#) said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and [Elijah](#) brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

Jezebel threatens Elijah

1 Kings 19:1-2 And Ahab told [Jezebel](#) all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then [Jezebel](#) sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

Elijah, Frightened, Runs Away

1 Kings 19:3-4 And when he saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and

sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!"

Elijah Feels Alone and Volulnerable

1 Kings 19:10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

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