

SESSION 4

DAVID: A FAITH THAT MEETS ADVERSITY HEAD-ON

Leader pages on pp. 114-117

THE POINT:
FAITH MOVES WITH
CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1 SAMUEL 17:3-8. 32-37, 45-47

³ The Philistines were standing on one hill, and the Israelites were standing on another hill with a ravine between them. ⁴ Then a champion named Goliath, from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine feet, nine inches tall ⁵ and wore a bronze helmet and bronze scale armor that weighed one hundred twenty-five pounds. ⁶ There was bronze armor on his shins, and a bronze javelin was slung between his shoulders. ⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver's beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed fifteen pounds. In addition, a shield-bearer was walking in front of him. ⁸ He stood and shouted to the Israelite battle formations, "Why do you come out to line up in battle formation?" He asked them, "Am I not a Philistine and are you not servants of Saul? Choose one of your men and have him come down against me. . . ."

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³² David said to Saul, "Don't let anyone be discouraged by him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!" ³³ But Saul replied, "You can't go fight this Philistine. You're just a youth, and he's been a warrior since he was young."

³⁴ David answered Saul, "Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." ³⁷ Then David said, "The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." . . .

MEMORY VERSE

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⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel—you have defied him. ⁴⁶ Today, the LORD will hand you over to me. Today, I'll strike you down, remove your head, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, ⁴⁷ and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD's. He will hand you over to us.

KEYWORDS

Choose one of your men (v. 8)—The account is an example of the ancient practice of representative warfare, where each side chose a soldier.

Your servant (v. 32)—Despite having been anointed in the previous chapter, David still humbled himself by submitting to Saul's kingship.

Just a youth (v. 33)—The Hebrew word suggests David was likely under twenty years-old—too young to be conscripted into service in the king's army.

HOW DOES GOD EXPECT US TO HANDLE OUR ADVERSITIES?

Many corporations do team-building exercises. It is the process of building a cohesive group that works productively together. The intended outcome is to create a strong team by forming connections and bonds. Many benefits can be derived from this. They include employee collaboration, planning expertise, motivation, trust, and increased communication. One of the most popular trust activities is the trust fall. It involves having team members fall backward into the arms of other team members. The purpose is to build trust between team members, which is an essential part of effective teams. It's incredible that a person would fall backward with their arms crossed, completely trusting in people that they have limited knowledge of. They do this because of the other exercises that have led up to that point. They have learned how to build trust with each other.



As Christians, we do this every day. We don't know what tomorrow may bring, or what the next minutes will bring. Proverbs 3:5 tells us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts. In the words of my late father-in-law, "ALL means ALL." We trust Him to lead us in the right direction.

In today's lesson on David, we will discover what it looks like to trust God in the most difficult situations of life.

Steady in the Face of Our Enemy // 1 Samuel 17:3-8

Soldiers put their faith in their training, their weapons, their team, and their cause. Victory depends upon training, leadership, and knowing the enemy and attacking its weaknesses. The Israelite and Philistine armies knew this tried-and-true principle. These armies camped across the valley from each other. Stalemate seemed to be the order of the day.

Psychological warfare can reveal your enemies' weaknesses and help break stalemates. The Philistines' most powerful psychological weapon was one man. Although he lived thousands of years ago, his name still brings fear into the hearts of men: Goliath.

Adversity comes in all shapes and sizes. Israel's adversary was one man from the ranks of the Philistines, in which the Israelite soldiers had only seen in their worst nightmares. Goliath intimidated everyone; his confidence rested in his own massive size and ego. Goliath's taunts had their desired effect on Israel.

While the Israelites stood in battle formation, their commanders, including King Saul, were in full panic mode (1 Sam. 17:11). The giant Goliath had discovered Israel's weakness. Have you discovered your weakness? King Saul and his Israelite army had shifted their faith from the God of the Exodus and placed it in their own fearful and cowering selves. The stalemate with the Philistines

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revealed Israel's lack of faith in their God, the One and only God of the universe. The Israelite soldiers hid in formation not wanting to stand out in the crowd.

Goliath gave Israel an easy way to break the stalemate: He offered to fight Israel's best warrior. Whoever won, the army of the loser would surrender to the victor and his army. The losers would be servants of the winner, but at least they wouldn't die on the battlefield. Goliath must have thought in the deepest parts of his being he was unbeatable.

Has the size of your faith landed you in a stalemate with a "giant"? Has your "giant" revealed the size of your faith? Your "giant" may be a medical diagnosis, a broken relationship, hesitation to obey God, or even running away from God's call. You might have thought your faith was much bigger than it turned out to be, and maybe you looked at your adversity rather than your God.

Faith in the wrong things can be like a squirrel's zig-zag path rather than strong faith in God, represented by a straight line through adversity.

The object of our faith reveals our faith. Our actions or inaction reveal the size of our faith. Don't put your faith in a uniform or in a leader. King Saul turned out to be as lacking in faith for his men. We'll soon see how this stalemate ended.

HOW CAN BELIEVERS LEARN TO SEE ADVERSITY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISPLAY THEIR FAITH?

Strengthened by Experiences //

1 Samuel 17:32-37

The stalemate between Israel and the Philistines had extended past forty days. Every day, the armies stood in battle formation and heard the same threats from Goliath. When would this end?

Finally, a young man with a strong faith in God entered Israel's camp. David, the son of Jesse, had three older brothers who were in Saul's army. His father sent him to deliver food to his brothers. David heard the pagan giant's taunts and asked what would happen to the man who killed Goliath. This question put him in the presence of King Saul.

Saul had searched his ranks for a warrior, but no one, including himself, had the faith to step up. Now, this kid brother showed up. David was the first to speak, giving Saul a great leadership lesson: "Don't let anyone be discouraged by him [Goliath]." David's instruction for the king revealed Saul's weak faith, which enlarged his army's discouragement.



DIGGING DEEPER GOLIATH

Most translations called Goliath a "champion." It is implicated that he had many successes in battle. He had a massive stature. Goliath had very elaborate military gear. According to Logos, he had on-leg armor called greaves. He wore a scale armor that was like the Egyptian's military gear. His helmet was believed to weigh approximately 30 pounds. The bronze-scaled coat he wore weighed about 150 pounds. They compared it to walking with a person strapped to your chest. Goliath's sword weighed about 30 pounds. The sword of Goliath appears again in 1 Samuel 21:9, when David retrieves it as he is fleeing from Saul and takes it with him while he hides in the city of Gath, the very hometown of Goliath himself.

What Goliath situation are you facing that only God can defeat?

What a great lesson. The faith of leaders impacts the faith of their followers.

Saul had little faith in God and even less in his men. He had no encouragement to offer his men or this kid. When David volunteered to fight this giant, Saul's default response was doubt. David's default response was faith in God, the source of his past victories over lions and bears.

Do you tell people about how God has delivered you from adversaries? Try it. Does your memory of God's help encourage you while facing new challenges? Your faith will increase when you give God the glory for your past victories. Don't be intimidated by what's before you, because you know God surrounds you.

Unlike Saul and his army, David didn't see Goliath as an unbeatable giant. He saw Goliath as similar to the lion or bear he had defeated in the past, with a notable difference. Goliath was an "uncircumcised Philistine" who had "defied the armies of the living God." David knew Goliath was just one more adversary God would destroy through him.

Saul's farewell blessing seemed half-hearted at best. He had little faith that David could accomplish this seemingly impossible task. In hindsight, it's easy to be critical of King Saul. He had a great army with many battle-hardened warriors, yet none wanted to fight Goliath. This young shepherd, David, knew God's power; Goliath didn't stand a chance.

Don't give your adversary victory before the battle. Your faith will grow with a little exercise. God can defeat all enemies.

WHAT PAST EXPERIENCES HAVE PREPARED YOU TO FACE CURRENT CHALLENGES?

Sured Up by Faith // 1 Samuel 17:45-47

Did David's brothers know about their younger brother's plan? If so, did they try to stop him?

Those details aren't contained in the narrative. David did reject the use of Saul's military clothes and weapons. Instead, he scooped up five smooth stones and stepped out of the faithless crowd of soldiers into the role of a national hero whose fame remains today.



Goliath was the first to speak as David arrived for battle. Goliath wasn't impressed by his young opponent and told David what would happen to him. After hearing these threats, other men may have retreated, but not David. He didn't back down from the promise of his death but guaranteed Goliath's death in the name of the Lord.

IF THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S, WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN CONFLICTS?

Fighting by faith in God means victory is not in your "weapons" but in the name of the Lord. David revealed God's charges against Goliath—he had defied God. Faith fighters know God defends His honor and His name.

Critics might call David's words in verse 46 "trash-talk," but they accurately described the events that would take place in the next few minutes. God would use David's experience and faith to strike down this pagan menace. David's faith was fully displayed as he spoke with certainty concerning his opponent's fate.

Jesus described faith in Matthew 17:20: "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move." Think of David. Goliath was a mountain of a man, and God "moved it" with the faith of David. David predicted Goliath's death, which would have two key results:

1. **First:** "Then all the world will know that Israel has a God." How will the world know that Israel has a God? Israel's God is the only true and

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living God. Goliath's god wasn't real. The countless gods of nations past and present were created by their followers. David received some honor from this win, but the power came from God. David's motivation was to defend the name of God. David's goal was to honor his God, not to receive personal recognition or fame.

2. **Second:** "This whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's. He will hand you over to us." David's words were powerful and memorable because they came true. Before David's words evaporated, their power made them unforgettable.

The principle of the David and Goliath narrative remains in our collective memories, but has the principle of the story been remembered correctly? Most would say that David was the underdog who overcame the giant to the surprise of everyone. It's time to look at it in this new way:

David's fight was the Lord's fight. David was the giant. David's mustard seed faith defeated Goliath. Goliath never had a chance.

WHAT ARE SOME GIANTS YOU'VE FACED IN YOUR LIFE?

DID YOU KNOW?

In Iraq in 2005, Sergeant 1st Class Alwyn C. Cashe was deployed with the 3rd Infantry Division. He was riding in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle that rolled over a roadside bomb. It exploded, and the vehicle was quickly engulfed in flames. He wasn't significantly hurt. However, he was drenched in fuel. After this, he somehow was able to make many trips to and from the burning vehicle to remove his fellow soldiers. He did this even when his own clothing continued to catch fire. Over 70% of his body sustained second and third-degree burns. He refused medical attention until all of the wounded men were flown to safety. When Cashe regained consciousness, he asked how the other soldiers were. He died three weeks later and was awarded the Silver Star. In December 2021, after his death, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. He is the first Black recipient of the medal since 2011.

Biblical Truth: "No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

What opportunity do you have to stand for the Lord on behalf of others?

LIVE IT

How can you move with confidence in God this week?

We face challenges and roadblocks, sometimes daily. But what do we do when the roadblock seems insurmountable and it's blocking the path we need to walk? We trust God. No roadblock or giant is too much for God, and when we trust Him, He works on our behalf. Faith moves with confidence in God. Choose one of the following applications:

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- **Remember.** Think back to the times in your life when you faced adversity and hardships. Did your response reveal weak or strong faith? Trust God to keep His word as you pray and ask God for greater faith in adversity.
- **Review.** How did God respond when you showed strong faith? Don't hesitate to continue to trust God as your faith grows. Journal the victories God has given you.
- **Relationship.** Spend time mentoring someone who is working on their faith journey. Teach others to strengthen their relationship with God through Scripture, prayer, and personal experience.

DAILY READINGS

1. FAITH OVER FEAR // MATTHEW 17:20

The Israelites knew God. They'd seen His hand. They'd witnessed miracles, yet when they met Goliath, a roughly nine-foot giant, their faith failed. This was adversity on a whole different level. Even with all they'd already seen God do, they found themselves afraid. This response is not uncommon. The Israelites let the size of their giant impact their faith in the size of their God. What they failed to realize is that God was not surprised by the occurrence of this giant in their life. He stood ready to deliver them. The same is true for us. No matter the giant, God stands ready to provide and protect His children. But like the Israelites, He can only move as far as our faith allows.

Don't allow your faith to hinder God from moving in your life.

2. WINNING TRACK RECORD // NUMBERS 11:23A

David had numerous encounters with God as a young shepherd boy, each one strengthening his faith for the next battle. When he saw Goliath, because of what God had already done with the lions and bears before, he knew that God could and would deliver Israel from this, too. His past experiences strengthened him. If we look back over the record of what God has done in our lives, we'll be strengthened too. He has told us to "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10). God's hand has not weakened, and we can speak with confidence of our coming deliverance!

Making a record of all that God has done is a sure way to encourage our faith.

3. SPEAK TO IT // 1 CORINTHIANS 15:57; ROMANS 8:37

In Western society, covenant is not something our society tends to understand well. But it's something that David understood all too well. He knew what God had promised. So, when he said,

"Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Sam. 17:26) – He meant it. What if our response to the giants in our lives was the same? We have a covenant with God. We are His people, and He has promised us that there is nothing we can't overcome through Christ.

There is no giant too big for God!

4. GOD-POSSIBLE // 1 SAMUEL 17:32; MARK 11:22-24

Think about how God must have felt to hear David speak about Him with unwavering strength. David encouraged the faith of the others and knew God was in the battle with him. This is the type of faith that pleases God, and this is the type of faith that moves God. What if we invited God into our adversities? What if we truly understood Who was fighting the battle for us and moved in that with full assurance? This would be a game changer. It is God who goes before us preparing the way to victory, and when we stand in agreement with His Word, we can know that "nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

There is no such thing as impossible with God!

5. STAND PERSUADED // ROMANS 8:38-39

If you are not convinced of what you believe, it is going to be hard to make anyone else believe it. When we share the gospel with others, any doubts we have will come through and possibly hinder our evangelism mission. Knowing that Christ is God's Son is not enough. We have to be convinced that Christ is God manifested in the flesh. We have to be confident He is the only way to be saved. This confidence is then demonstrated in how we live out our lives. When hard times come, we stand persuaded He is a Waymaker. When life grows dim, we stand persuaded that Jesus is The Light in darkness. Let nothing shake your faith in Christ.

Merciful God, thank you for sending Jesus to pay my sin debt. Help me stand strong in what I believe.