

"DAVID AND GOLIATH"

1 Samuel 17:1-58

Everyone seems to have heard about David and Goliath, even Tom Sawyer. When Judge Thatcher asks him the names of the first two apostles in a Bible quiz, Tom blurts out the first two names he can think of: "David and Goliath!" Tom was wrong, but at least he'd heard of them!

The Philistines were a group of people living in the promised land of Canaan. God had given Israel orders to drive all of them out so they could have the land for themselves. However, Israel still had not succeeded in driving the Philistines out.

Israel had yet to drive the Philistines out because they were strong militarily and they were technologically advanced and the Jews did not trust the Lord like they should have. They were one of the first civilizations to work with bronze and iron, and they used those metals to make their weapons—hence the repeated mention of all of Goliath's bronze weaponry.¹

Last week we learned that David was a "man after God's own heart." It was he and not his older more mature brothers whom Samuel anointed as the next king of Israel. . .

1 Samuel 16:13... Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

¹ J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, [*Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 128.

There is a repeated theme (16:18; 18:12, 14, 28) concerning young David—**“the Lord was with David.”** Truly it was the Lord’s presence in David’s life that preserved and caused him to prosper during times of personal crisis.²

1 Samuel 17:1—3... Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. 2 Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. 3 The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.

In response to the Philistine invasion, Saul’s army assembled in the Valley of Elah directly opposite the Philistine camp. Separating the two camps *geographically* was a wadi, a usually dry riverbed. Separating the Israelites from the Philistines *psychologically*, as the following verses indicate, was a chasm of fear.

1 Samuel 17:4—7... Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders. 7 The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron; his shield-carrier also walked before him.

Goliath was huge! The measurements given add up to about 9 feet and 9 inches. *His armor* seemed to be impregnable.

- **His head was covered with “a bronze helmet” .**
- **His trunk was protected by “a coat of scale armor” weighing about 126 lbs.**

² Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 181.

■ **Bronze greaves served as shin protectors.**

His weapons were quite impressive. These included a huge spear, a shield carried by a young man, a bronze javelin, and a sword. Can't you just imagine how intimidating he must have been!

1 Samuel 17:8—11... He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. **9** "If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." **10** Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." **11** When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Goliath was willing to fight a champion from the army of Israel with the loser and his army surrendering. It was one-on-one combat as a substitute for combat between two full armies. This mighty warrior insulted King Saul and the entire Israeli army. Look at verse 11. The results were devastating. King Saul and his men were "dismayed and greatly afraid." If only they had considered the Word of God:

Deuteronomy 1:21... 'See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'

2 Chronicles 20:14–15... Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph; **15** and he said, "Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's.

Goliath was a world champion *trash talker*. In fact, the Bible alludes to his arrogance and the insults he hurled at King Saul and his army . . .

1 Samuel 17:12–19... Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced *in years* among men. **13** The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were *Eliab* the firstborn, and the second to him *Abinadab*, and the third *Shammah*. **14** David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, **15** but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem. **16** The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand. **17** Then Jesse said to David his son, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers. **18** "Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of *their* thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. **19** "For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines."

Notice how the emphasis shifts to young David. Jesse's three oldest sons were serving in Saul's army. The other sons, including David, may have been under the age of twenty, the minimum age for military service in Israel; or perhaps families were required to provide no more than three sons for military service. Since the families of the soldiers supplied the rations for their relatives, David bore the responsibility for carrying food to his three brothers as well as the commander of their unit. ³

1 Samuel 17:20–24... So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took *the supplies* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. **21** Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. **22** Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. **23** As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard *them*. **24**

³ Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 191.

When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid.

Perhaps for the first time in his life David heard a pagan ridiculing the Lord. He also saw the reaction of King Saul and his army— "They fled from him and were greatly afraid."

I want you to understand that FEAR IS THE ENEMY OF FAITH! Are you facing some giants tonight?

- Insecurity
- Depression
- Addiction
- Disease

You don't have to be dismayed and greatly afraid! Tonight I want to show you how to defeat these giants that you are ripping you apart. Let's look at the rest of the story.

1 Samuel 17:25–30... The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel." 26 Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" 27 The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, "Thus it will be done for the man who kills him." 28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." 29 But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" 30 Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before.

Though King Saul would not personally fight the giant, he would handsomely reward anyone who successfully did so.

(1) riches from the king

(2) marriage to the king's daughter

(3) no taxes for that person's family for life.

You might think for that price tag at least one crazy soldier would take the risk. Nobody took him up on it. What good is being rich and royal and tax free if you aren't alive to enjoy it?

Goliath's words were not just an insult directed against the Israelite army; they were also an assault on "the living God." David's interest in this matter (vs. 26) irritated Eliab. Was it due to his own fear of Goliath? Or perhaps he was envious of David. Whatever the case, his attitude and actions underscore the reason he was not anointed to be the next king of Israel.

It is a tragic irony that some of the most discouraging opposition Christians face comes from the people who should be on God's side. Confronting an enemy like Goliath is frightening enough as it is, but often added to that are the supposed believers who do everything in their power to prevent sincere young Christians from stepping out in bold faith. The cowardly people of God are always the biggest obstacle to the mission of God.⁴

This criticism by a family member parallels what Joseph faced with his brothers and what Jesus faced with his family. When you attempt great things for God and you expect great things from God, you will likely catch some flack!

1 Samuel 17:31–37... When the words which David spoke were heard, they told *them* to Saul, and he sent for him. 32 David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 33 Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are *but* a youth while he has been a

⁴ J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, [*Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 130.

warrior from his youth.” **34** But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, **35** I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued *it* from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized *him* by his beard and struck him and killed him. **36** “Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.” **37** And 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 may the LORD be with you.”

I love David’s response in verse 32! Saul immediately rejected David’s offer and rattled off an obvious reason why David could not and should not attempt to battle with Goliath. David countered with some reasons why HE COULD DEFEAT GOLIATH (34-37).

In David’s way of thinking, fighting “*the uncircumcised Philistine*” would be just like the fights he had with the lion and the bear. The Lord had delivered David in both situations. He fully believed that the God of Israel would deliver him from the pagan and pompous Philistine champion.

I like the way David thought! This is the way you have to think when you are taking on the giants in your life.

1 Samuel 17:38–40...Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. **39** David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. So David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested *them*.” And David took them off. **40** He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in *his* pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

In the New American Commentary, Bergen commented . . .

Ironically, Saul’s actions confirmed and foreshadowed the royal status God promised David: the Lord had clothed David with the Spirit that enabled

kingship; now Saul clothed David with the symbols that exemplified kingship. . . .The writer's inclusion of the clothing incident probably was meant to serve two functions: first, to indicate the greater value of divine enablement over human devices; second and more importantly, to symbolize David's rejection of Saul's approach to kingship. Saul chose to dress in royal clothing "such as all the other nations have"; David would wear none of it. Instead, he would identify with the great shepherd-leaders of the Torah—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and especially Moses—and live by faith in the promises of God (Heb 11).⁵

1 Samuel 17:41–44... Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."

Winning a contest against a boy who was not outfitted like a warrior and certainly didn't have the weapons of a warrior would not be particularly prestigious for the Philistine champion. So, "he distained" David and launched a psychological attack in order to take away any hope he had of success. Goliath threatened to kill David, dishonor his corpse, and deny him an honorable burial.⁶

⁵ Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 194.

⁶ Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 195.

Compare their qualifications . . .

Goliath	David
Experienced warrior – a champion	Never fought in a war
One of the most powerful men in history	A mere youth with ordinary strength
Armed with the best weapons of war	Armed with a stick, a sling and five stones
Trusting in himself	Trusting in the Lord

1 Samuel 17:45–47... Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. 46 “This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and He will give you into our hands.”

David’s bold and courageous faith was evident in his response to Goliath. His use of the sling and stone also must have been motivated by the fact that he was skillful in their use and the weapon was especially suited for exploiting Goliath’s vulnerabilities. As David viewed it, Goliath was outnumbered and

would soon be overpowered, for the Lord would fight with David against the giant.⁷

Eyewitnesses to the ensuing battle would learn a valuable lesson. The takeaway truth was this— “that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord’s.”

1 Samuel 17:48–51... Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. 50 Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David’s hand. 51 Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

David’s weapon of choice against Goliath provided him with a tremendous advantage over the weapons at Goliath’s disposal. Goliath’s weapons were of value only in close combat. On the other hand, David could use his sling with deadly force from comparatively great distances. **SHOW VIDEO**

CONCLUSION

Until we see Christ’s victory in David’s story, we miss the central thrust of this passage. There are two lessons we must learn . . .

Because Jesus Took Out the Real Giant in Our Lives, We Can Bravely Face All the Lesser Giants

⁷ Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 195–196.

The real menacing giant in our lives is not our present situation, however tragic. The real giant in our lives is the one that has already been defeated at the cross—the giant of sin, death, and separation from God. Because Jesus absorbed the wrath of God in our place, we can have confidence in the face of every other challenge.

In Christ we have no need to be afraid of death (Phil 1:21).

In Christ we have no need to be afraid of the future.

In Christ we have no need to be afraid of pain in our relationships.

In Christ we have no need to be afraid of the disapproval of others. (Rom 8:31)

Through the Story of David and Goliath, God Also Gives His People a Pattern for How We Can Overcome the Giants We Face.⁸

1 Corinthians 10:11... Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

God makes the lesson as obvious and clear as it can be made. If we trust completely in Him, we will defeat even the toughest enemy. We have many daily opportunities to express our faith in the Lord, even in small ways. As we exercise faith in these smaller areas, God increases our faith to prepare us for greater tests of faith.

Here are a few of the “little things” for which you must say “Yes” to the Lord in order to have victory over the occasional “Goliaths” that He will allow to come into your life.

- **Spend daily time in the Word and prayer.**

⁸ J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, [*Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 133–134.

April 1, 2026
CFBC... "David"

- **Worship with the church regularly.**
- **Humble yourself and repent of all known sin.**
- **Give regularly and generously to the Lord's work.**
- **Share the "Good News" with others often.**