



## The Faith of a Shepherd

If you're drawn to the life of David, the shepherd boy, warrior, king, and psalmist, you cannot ignore his response to Goliath's challenge in the hills of Israel.

David had obeyed Jesse and left his father's sheep with a keeper to travel to the site of the latest Israelite-Philistine battle. Jesse had asked that David confirm the safety of his three eldest brothers and deliver food to them and their commanding officer.

David had no idea that upon his arrival in the Valley of Elah he would encounter an army of cowards and an imposing giant.

Being someone who works best with visuals, as I read through the details of this battle in 1 Samuel I tried to move past every Sunday School picture of the giant I had in my mind and envision what it would have been like to look at a man that size. The more I read about this hulk\*, a picture of professional wrestler, actor, and businessman The Rock came to mind. Maybe you have heard of or seen Dwayne Johnson. Widely regarded as one of the greatest wrestlers of all time, he bills a height of 6 feet, 5 inches and a weight of 260 pounds - a big dude for sure, although not as tall as Scripture tells us Goliath was. Goliath was in fact every cubit as tall as Samuel portrayed.

And David the opposite. No matter his age at the time of the confrontation, David was clearly dwarfed by Goliath in both size and skill. Even Saul told him,

"You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth."

David's faith in our God, however, far surpassed both his stature and his experience.

### **1 Samuel 17:26b**

"...For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

### **1 Samuel 17:37**

And David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

### **1 Samuel 17:45-46a, 47**

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with 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 defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."

Battlefield experience, power, and authority all led to paralyzing fear – for 40 days.

Faith in the living God and the experience of a shepherd led to full confidence in God alone – immediately.

David recounted the times God had been faithful in the past and knew God would be faithful again.

If you know the story, you know the fate of Goliath: humiliation and death from a shepherd's sling and a stone. With the first shot, the 9-1/2-foot-tall giant fell flat on his face.

That is exactly how our fears can fall, fellow under-shepherd, if we choose to trust as David the shepherd did. When we remember the faithfulness of our God, all He has done for us in the most difficult of circumstances – financial struggles, team conflict, church splits, painful betrayals, terrifying diagnoses – and all He accomplishes for us every day – His Provision, His Protection, and His Presence – we can have faith in the moments when everyone around us is terrified, frozen in fear, and running for their lives.

Because we know the True Shepherd, the One who has proven Himself faithful... our Rock, our fortress, our Deliverer. Trust Him today everywhere you shepherd, dear friend. You will never regret it.

\*Goliath was at least 9-1/2-feet tall and had the physical ability to wear a 10-to-15-pound bronze helmet (which did not cover his forehead!), wear a 125-pound bronze coat of a mail (in essence, a metal sleeveless shirt), don bronze leg armor weighing 15 to 20 pounds, and carry a 5-foot long javelin with a shaft 2 to 2-1/2 inches thick tipped with a 15-pound iron spearhead.

## Digging Deeper Questions

1. Are you able to recount the times God has been faithful in your role as shepherd?
2. Were there times in your role as shepherd you were paralyzed with fear?
3. Who or what is a giant in your life that you need to overcome with the Father's help?