

1.2

DAVID AND GOLIATH

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God fights our battles for us.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will face my giants with confidence in my God.



FOCUS VERSES: I Samuel 17:45-46

⁴⁵ Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

LESSON TEXT: I Samuel 17:38-51



BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: I Samuel 17:38–51

The story of David's defeat of the Philistine giant Goliath is one of the most widely known stories in the Bible. People who have never opened a Bible often reference this narrative to describe a lopsided matchup between two parties. However, David and Goliath's interaction is more than a tale of a small man and a looming giant. The story ultimately demonstrates the importance of faith in God and allowing Him to fight our battles.

The fact that David even ventured onto the field of battle was an indictment on the entirety of Israel's army. None of the other soldiers, including the anointed King Saul, had thought to invoke God's name in the situation. Furthermore, David had no military experience. David's bravery contrasted Saul's cowardice; David's faith contrasted Saul's doubt. David entered the battleground with no armor or significant weapons except fervent trust in the God of Israel.

David refused to use Saul's armor, which was conventional trappings of warfare. Instead, David used what had worked for him in the past. God's ability to bring victory in small battles should give us faith that He will bring us victory again in larger battles.

Goliath entered the fight fully equipped with massive weaponry and armor; David had only a sling and five small stones. Goliath was disgusted by the sight of David, possibly insulted by the notion that Israel believed he could be defeated by a puny, young man. David's diminutive stature on the fighting ground only further served to demonstrate that if any battle were to be won that day, God would have to be the One to win it.

After Goliath ranted angrily at David, ruddy David responded with faith and trust in God, concluding that "the battle is the LORD's" (I Samuel 17:47). David's surrender of the battle to God is an even further indictment on his king and the army. Given that God was ultimately the one who won the battle, any Israelite could have invoked God's name, surrendered to Him, and allowed God to conquer their enemies supernaturally. David's defeat of Goliath further demonstrated why God chose David to eventually be king over Israel. David instinctively turned to God in almost every circumstance. David's ability to win battles did not come from his bravery or natural strength, but from his ability to surrender everything to the LORD.

THE STORY ULTIMATELY DEMONSTRATES
THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH IN GOD AND
ALLOWING HIM TO FIGHT OUR BATTLES.

DAY 1

I Samuel 17:38-40

³⁸ And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. ³⁹ And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. ⁴⁰ And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

Biblical Insight

As king of Israel, Saul would have been equipped with the strongest, most durable armor they could manufacture. On the surface, Saul's gesture seemed generous. However, David rightfully discerned that Saul's armor would have been more of a hindrance than a help because David was entirely unfamiliar with it.

David's rejection of Saul's armor was also a rejection of Saul's method for winning battles. Saul assumed David would defeat Goliath using brute human force, but David would conquer Goliath by invoking God's name. David's refusal to do things like Saul foreshadowed David's eventual kingship, where David thrived precisely because he was not like his predecessor.

Daily Devotion

When staring through the sight of a 1985 anti-tank gun, Ukrainian Junior Sergeant Dmytro Pysanka was greeted with numbers and lines that provided needed calculations to fire at Russian forces. To negate common errors that occur in the heat of battle, the West had supplied Sergeant Pysanka's artillery unit with high-tech range finders that utilize laser technology to measure distances. This technology is exactly what the Ukrainians needed to update their old anti-tank guns.

Unfortunately, no one knew how to use the high-end Western technology. According to Sergeant Pysanka, "It's like being given an iPhone 13 and only being able to make phone calls" (*The New York Times*, "High-tech Western Weapons Pose Challenge for Untrained Ukrainian Soldiers").

Since we are engaged in spiritual warfare, God has equipped each of us with supernatural, spiritual armor and weapons that are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (II Corinthians 10:4). It is not enough to possess the armor of God and spiritual weapons; we must utilize them daily, else we will forget how to use them during the next enemy attack. It is better to become familiar with our weapons before a battle than during a battle.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

I Samuel 17:41–44

⁴¹ And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. ⁴² And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. ⁴³ And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Biblical Insight

Before Goliath charged at David, Goliath cursed him “by his gods.” This phrase reminds readers that the battle waged on the field was ultimately not between David and Goliath or even between the Israelites and the Philistines; the battle was between God, fighting on behalf of His people, and the wickedness that would come against God’s children. When the reader understands that God was ultimately the one doing the fighting, the imagery is reversed. Goliath and his false gods are the real underdogs, with God looming over the battlefield larger than Goliath ever could.

Daily Devotion

In 1931, the International Olympic Committee awarded the 1936 Summer Olympics to Berlin, Germany, hoping to signal Germany’s return to the world community after Germany’s defeat in World War I. Unfortunately, in 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power and transformed the German government into a one-party dictatorship whose aim was to strengthen the “Aryan race” through anti-Semitic policies.

Seeking an opportunity to advance Nazi ideology to the world, Hitler provided extensive funding for the Berlin Games. By 1935, prominent Jewish athletes around the world chose to boycott the Olympics. Other athletes who were non-Aryans chose to participate in spite of the immense Nazi propaganda and hate.

The star of the Berlin Olympics, African-American track athlete Jesse Owens, did more than win four gold medals and break world records. Jesse Owens, along with other African American athletes, struck a blow to Nazi propaganda.

While we may pray for God to deliver us from our enemies, sometimes it is God’s will for us to triumph over our adversaries. When we are victorious despite our enemy’s attack, we too can strike a blow at the devil’s propaganda.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

I Samuel 17:45

⁴⁵ Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

Biblical Insight

David's retort to Goliath's arrogance is compelling for its carefully chosen phrasing. David juxtaposed Goliath's weapons—sword, spear, and shield—with David's weapon, the name of the LORD. David did not mention his sling and five small stones, indicating he did not put his faith in those weapons. Instead, David understood that God's name was more powerful than any weapon on the battlefield that day. David also recognized that Goliath had terrorized God's people and blasphemed God's name. David knew that God would fight for the protection of His people and for the glory of His own name.

Daily Devotion

On January 26, 1945, six German tanks and waves of German infantry besieged an American infantry company. Second Lieutenant Audie L. Murphy ordered his outnumbered men to fall back to nearby woods for cover while he remained, hoping to slow the German advance.

Soon an American tank behind Lieutenant Murphy was hit and burst into flames. The young lieutenant leaped onto the burning tank and grabbed its .50-caliber machine gun. On top of a burning tank, with a gunshot wound to his leg and exposed on three sides to the enemy, Murphy was all that stood between the advancing German army and his regiment. Lieutenant Murphy stood alone and continued his barrage, until finally the enemy began to retreat. The nineteen-year-old American hero received the Medal of Honor for his bravery. By the end of his military career, Lieutenant Audie Murphy had become the most decorated hero of World War II.

Our spiritual leaders daily stand in the gap between us and the enemy. There are not enough medals in the world for the people who lead and pray for us. Let us also pray for our spiritual leaders. You never know the far-reaching spiritual impact when you are praying for them.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

I Samuel 17:46

⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

Biblical Insight

David turned Goliath's threat in verse 44 back on him, threatening to feed his body to wild birds and animals. David's threat to cut off Goliath's head would have been seen as ridiculous; David didn't even have a sword. However, David recognized he would not be able to win this battle by his own power; God would deliver Goliath into David's hand. David also provided a motivation for this threat: "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." David was not seeking personal glory or even patriotic glory for Israel's renown. David sought glory for God alone.

Daily Devotion

On June 24, 1901, a gallery on Paris's Rue Laffitte held the first major exhibition of Pablo Picasso's artwork. The seventy-five works displayed throughout the Parisian gallery were moody, representational paintings with diverse subjects ranging from street scenes and landscapes all the way to societal women. Art critics praised the nineteen-year-old's artistic genius as each painting boasted of the young Spaniard's talents.

The paintings represented countless hours of honing his craft even though many of those artistic works would never grace the walls of a gallery. As the art critics declared Picasso an artistic prodigy, they were unaware that Picasso had painted hundreds of works prior to his 1901 exhibit.

The triumph of Picasso's first and successive exhibition was the result of what he did alone. Behind Picasso's success were countless hours preparing canvases, mixing paints, sketching, taking photos, and painting. Some of these paintings were scrapped and painted over again.

Behind David's triumph over Goliath were countless hours of slingshot practice, praise, worship, and shepherding when he was alone in the fields.

Investing in your gifts, talents, spiritual disciplines, and relationship with God is never wasted. These investments allow you to win the battle before stepping onto the battlefield.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

I Samuel 17:47-51

⁴⁷ And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands. ⁴⁸ And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. ⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. ⁵¹ Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

Biblical Insight

David's unconventional defeat of Goliath proved David's invocation in verse 47: "the battle is the LORD's." David's lopsided victory over Goliath was so fast and one-sided that the only possible conclusion could be that God had won the battle on David's and Israel's behalf. The historian writing this story made a special note in verse 50: "there was no sword in the hand of David." David did not win by any conventional warfare. He used Goliath's own sword to sever the giant's head. God took what the Philistines had intended for Israel's destruction and turned it back on the enemy.

Daily Devotion

King Henry V was leading his disease-ridden, war-weary soldiers to meet the English fleet and return to England. However, a vast French army of twenty thousand men blocked his path to the sea at Agincourt. On October 25, 1415, the vastly outnumbered English knights and archers engaged in combat with the French.

With odds greater than three to one, the Englishmen won because their army was not weighed down. The knights in the vast French army wore armor weighing between 66 to 110 pounds. By the time they arrived at the battlefield, they were exhausted. The battlefield was also muddy, causing the heavily-armored French knights to sink. The outcome of the Hundred Years' War turned because of the weight soldiers were carrying.

Sometimes we feel like we are losing a spiritual battle because we are encumbered by the cares of life, unforgiveness, bitterness, hurt, and other weights. It is important to cast aside every weight during our prayer times, while being careful not to pick up new ones.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
