

LESSON 7

David: Equipped in the Fields

1 Samuel 16:6–13; 17:32–37

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.’”

1 Samuel 16:7

Class Overview: David’s preparation for leadership didn’t begin on a battlefield or in a palace; it began in the quiet fields of Bethlehem. While others saw only a shepherd boy, God saw a man after His own heart. The skills David developed, faithfulness, courage, humility, and trust, were all forged in obscurity. When the day came to face Goliath, David was ready because he had already learned to rely on God’s strength, not his own. This lesson reminds us that God often equips His servants in hidden places long before He calls them into public service. What we learn in the field prepares us for what we face in the fight.

Class Objectives: By the end of this class, you should be able to—

1. Describe how God prepared David through his early experiences as a shepherd.
2. Understand how private faithfulness builds public readiness for God’s work.
3. Recognize that spiritual preparation often happens in ordinary, unseen moments.
4. Explain how David’s confidence in God shaped his victory over Goliath.
5. Commit to trusting that God is preparing you—even now—for greater service.

Introduction

WHEN GOD SENT SAMUEL TO BETHLEHEM TO ANOINT ISRAEL'S NEXT KING, no one expected it to be David. He wasn't the oldest, strongest, or most experienced. In fact, he wasn't even invited to the ceremony. While Jesse's other sons stood before Samuel, David was out tending sheep. Yet that's where God found him, faithfully doing ordinary work with an extraordinary heart. The Lord told Samuel, *"Man does not see what the Lord sees, for man sees what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7).

That moment set the course for David's life. Before he ever faced Goliath or wore a crown, David learned to walk with God in solitude. The fields became his classroom. There he learned to worship, to fight off predators, and to trust God with every challenge. Those unseen years prepared him for every public moment that would follow. David's story reminds us that God's greatest preparation often happens out of the spotlight and without applause. When we are faithful in the small things, God equips us for the greater things to come.

Historical Background

By the time of 1 Samuel 16, Israel was disillusioned with King Saul. Although he had started with promise, Saul's pride and disobedience led to God's rejection of his kingship (1 Samuel 15:26). God told Samuel to anoint a new king from among Jesse's sons in Bethlehem. This secret anointing marked the start of David's divine preparation.

David was the youngest of eight brothers and worked as a shepherd: a humble, often-overlooked role in that culture. However, this was exactly where God shaped him. Shepherding required courage, patience, and care for the flock: qualities that reflected the kind of leader God desired for His people. By defending sheep from lions and bears, David learned to depend on God's strength. These experiences laid the foundation of his faith when he later faced Goliath.

The contrast between Saul and David is eye-opening. Saul appeared the part of a king: tall, strong, and commanding. David was small, young, and unimpressive by human standards. But God was teaching Israel a

new rule of leadership: outward ability does not equal spiritual maturity. The Lord wanted a king who would trust Him, not himself.

When David faced Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, he was still unknown to the nation. Yet, the courage that rose in him that day was not new; it had been built over years of quiet trust. While others analyzed the giant's strength, David remembered God's faithfulness. He 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"* (17:37). David's private victories had prepared him for this public one.

No act of faithfulness is ever wasted. God uses every small act of obedience, each trial, and every unseen challenge to shape His servants. The quiet seasons serve as the testing grounds for His kingdom. Before David ever wielded a sword, he carried a staff, and through that staff, God prepared a shepherd to become a king.

God Prepares His Servants in Ordinary Places

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem to anoint the next king, Jesse presented seven of his sons. Each looked like a likely choice. But God rejected them all, saying, *"The Lord does not see as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7). Only after Samuel asked if there were any others did Jesse mention David, "the youngest," who was out with the sheep. While no one else saw potential in David, God did. The field where David worked was not a place of neglect; it was a place of preparation.

The shepherd's field became David's training ground for leadership. It was there that he learned responsibility, faithfulness, and courage. Day after day, he cared for his father's flock, protecting them from predators and guiding them to food and water. Those seemingly routine tasks forged the very character traits God would later use in him as king. Long before David led a nation, he learned to lead sheep. Long before he faced giants, he faced lions and bears. In that quiet place of duty, David discovered what every servant of God must learn: nothing is wasted when it is done faithfully before the Lord.

God often works this way in our lives. He equips us in ordinary, unnoticed places. The fields might not seem important, but they are where faith is developed. Many of God's greatest servants, Joseph in prison, Moses in the desert, and Ruth in the harvest fields, were prepared for big things through humble beginnings. The same God who shaped David in obscurity still uses hidden seasons to strengthen His people today.

David's time in the fields also deepened his relationship with God. Alone with his sheep, he learned to pray, worship, and depend on the Lord's presence. Many of the Psalms that would later bless generations were born out of those solitary moments of reflection. The heart that wrote *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"* (Psalm 23:1) was shaped by years of knowing what it meant to be a shepherd himself.

We live in a culture that values visibility, but God values faithfulness. He cares more about who we are becoming than how quickly we catch the world's attention. David's early life demonstrates that true preparation requires time. The quiet years are not wasted; they are sacred. They build the foundation for the moments when God entrusts us with greater responsibility.

So when you find yourself in a season that feels small or unseen, remember David. God may be using this time to prepare you for a task you cannot yet imagine. Faithfulness in the field comes before fruitfulness in the fight. The same God who saw David among the sheep sees you where you are today, shaping your heart for the work He has ahead.

God Uses Past Faithfulness to Build Future Confidence

When David stood before King Saul, volunteering to face Goliath, his words revealed the quiet strength of a man shaped by God's faithfulness. Saul saw only a boy, inexperienced and outmatched. But David remembered what God had already done: *"Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth*

... *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.*" (1 Samuel 17:34–37)

Those earlier battles weren't random; they were rehearsals for this moment. Each time David faced danger in the fields, he learned to depend on the Lord's strength instead of his own. By the time he stood before the giant, his confidence didn't rely on weapons or armor; it was based on a track record of divine faithfulness. Every private victory prepared him for a public one.

God often builds our confidence in the same way. He allows us to face smaller trials first, teaching us to trust Him in daily struggles so we'll be ready for bigger ones. Every answered prayer, every moment of rescue, every lesson learned in difficulty becomes proof of His reliability. When new challenges come up, we can look back and say, "The Lord who helped me before will help me again." That kind of faith isn't just theoretical, it's proven through experience.

Notice also how David spoke about the Lord's role in his past victories. He didn't boast about his courage or skill. He said, "*The Lord who rescued me.*" David understood that the same God who delivered him from wild beasts would also deliver him from Goliath. His faith was rooted in God's unchanging nature, not in his own ability. That is what distinguishes godly confidence from pride. Pride says, "I can do this." Faith says, "God has done it before, He will do it again."

Courage grows from memory. Remembering how God has acted in the past fuels our confidence today. When we forget His faithfulness, fear takes over. But when we recall His power and presence, fear loses its grip. This is why Scripture often calls us to remember, to recount God's mighty acts. Forgetfulness leads to unbelief; remembrance leads to faith.

For Christians today, the message is clear: the fields where you stand now are shaping the faith you'll need later. The small acts of obedience and trust you practice today are preparing you for bigger challenges ahead. God wastes nothing. The victories you gain now: over temptation, doubt, or hardship, are laying the groundwork for future courage.

David's confidence was not blind optimism; it was the result of tested faith. The God who had helped him before would help him again. And

that same God still trains His people in the same way. Every challenge we face becomes both a test and a testimony. What God shows us in past faithfulness becomes the confidence we need for future battles.

God's Power Triumphs Through Dependent Faith

When David stepped onto the battlefield, the odds looked impossible. Goliath was over nine feet tall, armored, and armed with weapons no ordinary man could handle. Israel's soldiers trembled, and even King Saul, who should have led the charge, stood paralyzed by fear. But David saw the situation differently. While others judged their strength against Goliath's, David judged Goliath's strength against God's. His perspective changed everything.

David declared, *"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. Today, the Lord will hand you over to me ... and the whole world will know that Israel has a God. 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"* (1 Samuel 17:45–47).

These words reveal the core of dependent faith. David understood that victory would not come from his sling or skill but through God's power. His confidence was not in what he held but in whom he trusted in his heart. The phrase "the battle is the Lord's" captures David's entire outlook on life and leadership. Every fight, every challenge, every hardship belonged to God first.

In defeating Goliath, David demonstrated more than courage; he demonstrated theology. He recognized that God's glory was at stake. Goliath had mocked the living God, and David's goal was not self-promotion but defending God's honor. True faith always seeks God's glory, not personal victory. The sling and stone were just tools; the real weapon was David's trust in God's power.

God still works today through dependent faith. He doesn't need great strength or impressive resources to accomplish His will, He takes joy in using those who trust Him completely. Paul expressed this truth when

he wrote, “*God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the strong*” (1 Corinthians 1:27). When we trust Him, even our smallest acts of faith can produce great results.

Relying on God can look foolish to the world. Saul offered David his armor, but David declined it. He understood that worldly strength cannot achieve spiritual victory. Faith often asks us to let go of what seems logical and trust in what is faithful. David’s confidence did not come from strategy or size but from surrender.

Every Christian faces giants: obstacles that seem too big to overcome. But the same God who gave David strength gives us strength too. Our “giants” may be fear, temptation, doubt, or opposition, but the principle stays the same: “*The battle is the Lord’s.*” We do not fight alone. God’s power works through our trust, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Dependent faith always points beyond itself. When David’s stone struck Goliath, the victory belonged not to a shepherd boy but to the God who had trained him in the field. When we trust God completely, His power does what our strength never could. The field, the sling, and the stone all become instruments in the hands of a faithful God.

Lesson Summary and Reflection

David’s early life demonstrates that God’s preparation is never wasted. Long before he faced Goliath, he learned to stand before God. His heart for worship, his faith in God’s power, and his courage in danger were all developed in the quiet fields of Bethlehem. While others saw an insignificant shepherd, God saw a future servant being molded for great things. The same pattern remains true: God trains His people privately before He uses them publicly.

First, *God prepares His servants in ordinary places.* David’s years with the sheep were not a delay but a purpose. Faithfulness in small tasks builds character for greater responsibility. When God develops His people in quiet places, He is shaping hearts that can withstand pressure and remain humble in the face of success. The work done in obscurity is often the most sacred preparation for service.

Second, *God uses past faithfulness to build future confidence*. The courage David showed in the valley of Elah was born from his experiences in the fields. Every lion and bear he faced was training for Goliath. Remembering God's faithfulness in the past gave him strength for the present. The same is true for us when we remember how God has helped us before; our fear fades, and faith takes its place.

Third, *God's power prevails through dependent faith*. David's victory over Goliath wasn't about strength or skill but trust. He stepped forward in weakness, relying entirely on God's power. His declaration, "*The battle is the Lord's*," demonstrates the heart of faith. God takes pleasure in working through those who depend on Him. His strength is most evident when we recognize our weakness and give Him the glory.

David's story reminds us that our current situations are preparation. The unseen seasons of our lives, the daily tasks, quiet prayers, and unnoticed acts of obedience, are where God shapes us most deeply. He is building trust, courage, and faith that will help us when our own "Goliaths" arise. What matters is not how visible our work is, but how faithful we are to the One who called us.

Key Truths

- God often trains His servants in hidden, ordinary places.
- Faithfulness in small things prepares us for larger challenges.
- Remembering God's past faithfulness builds confidence for the future.
- True victory comes through dependence on God's strength, not our own.
- The battles we face belong to the Lord—our task is to trust and obey.

Conclusion

David's story is about trusting a faithful God. The courage that faced Goliath was built through quiet obedience. The heart that led Israel was shaped in solitude. God's way of preparing us is often slow and unseen, but it is always purposeful.

You might feel like you're in the "fields" right now, doing everyday work, waiting for something greater. But remember, God is using this season

to prepare you for what's ahead. Every act of faithfulness matters. Every step of obedience gets you ready. The same God who trained David is training you. When the time comes, you'll be prepared—not because of your strength, but because of His.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

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."

1 Samuel 17:37 (CSB)

See David's heart of faith. His confidence didn't come from skill or experience but from remembering God's past deliverance. Every servant of God can draw strength from the same truth: the God who has been faithful before will be faithful again.

Weekly Challenge

1. Reflect on Your "Field."

Identify the ordinary places where God may be shaping your heart right now. Ask Him to help you see value and purpose in what feels routine or unnoticed.

2. Remember Past Victories.

Make a list of moments when God has helped, protected, or guided you. Thank Him for His faithfulness and use those memories to strengthen your confidence in current challenges.

3. Face One "Goliath."

Think of one area in your life where fear or doubt stands tall. Pray over it daily this week, declaring, *"The battle is the Lord's."*

4. Encourage a Fellow Servant.

Remind someone else who feels overlooked that God often prepares His greatest servants in hidden places.

5. Worship in the Fields.

Take time this week to pray or sing privately, as David did. Praise turns ordinary moments into holy preparation.

For Discussion

1. How has God used ordinary or hidden seasons in your life to prepare you for greater responsibility?

2. What past experiences remind you of God's faithfulness and help you face present challenges with confidence?

3. Why do you think God often allows long periods of preparation before giving His servants public work?

4. What does it mean in practical terms to say, "*The battle is the Lord's*"?

5. How can David's example encourage you to remain faithful and dependent on God when you feel unnoticed or unimportant?
