

Future HS | The Gift on the Other Side of the Battle

Beyond

Series Description:

Life is full of next steps you can't see yet — decisions, losses, callings, and seasons that feel uncertain. Beyond helps students step into the unseen future God is inviting them toward by anchoring them in Scripture and practical rhythms. Rooted in passages like James, Romans, 1 Peter, John, and Jeremiah, this series shows that hardship doesn't cancel God's plan — it refines faith, builds character, and produces hope. Each session moves from honest theology (God's sovereignty over the future; suffering as sanctifying) to short, usable practices (prayer, confession, faithful rhythms, community) so students learn to move forward even when the next thing is invisible. The goal is to turn anxious wondering into steady, forward-looking faith: students who expect God to be at work in today, who live toward his promises, and who practice spiritual habits that shape how they step into tomorrow.

Core Theology Insights:

Sovereignty, Sanctification, Incarnational Presence, Redemption, Active Faith

Emphasized Relationships:

God, Self, Others

Response:

Hopeful, persevering faith that moves toward God's promises.



Title

The Gift on the Other Side of the Battle

Scripture

1 Samuel 17:45-47

Bottom Line

The Gift on the Other Side of the Battle

Memory Verse

"But we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." – Romans 5: 3b-5

25 min

Teaching

5 min

Introduction (ME)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Tension (WE)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Leader Note:

Before you read or teach this section, share a short, honest story from your own life about a time you were carrying too much (stress, family pressure, anxiety, grief, burnout) and finally admitted you needed help. The goal is to model vulnerability and show students that even leaders hit a point where they can't hold everything alone. Keep it real and age-appropriate.

After you share, you can say something like, "Here's an example of the kind of story I mean," and then use or adapt the story below. The following story is pulled from this week's video. You can also choose to play the video provided.

Example:

I help take care of my mom. She lives with me and has a bunch of health issues. She's diabetic and wants sugar. She has high blood pressure and wants salt. High cholesterol and wants fried food. Basically, everything she's supposed to avoid is her favorite thing. My job is to say "no" a lot and sometimes get yelled at for caring.

For a while, I handled it. I told myself, "I'm fine. This is what I'm supposed to do." But slowly it wore me down. Imagine constantly trying to protect someone who doesn't like your limits and treats you like the problem for trying to help. I knew I needed help, not because I was weak, but because I was done pretending this was easy.

My job has an Employee Assistance Program, so I called and got six free sessions with a therapist. I went in, sat down, and for an hour she said almost nothing. She just listened. I told her how my mom's words made me feel, how some of this hurt wasn't new, it was lifelong, and how angry I actually was. She didn't give me a list of fixes. She didn't solve anything. But I walked out lighter just because someone finally heard everything I'd been carrying.

When I left, it reminded me of 1 Peter 5:7. God really does see my needs, my burdens, and He'll send people and things in my life, like my therapist, to help me.

A lot of us are carrying more than we admit: family drama that keeps you tense, pressure to keep grades up, expectations to be "on" all the time for friends, anxiety that hits late at night, guilt you don't know what to do with.

5 min

Truth (GOD)**What You Need**

No supplies needed

You don't want to dump all of that on friends. You may not want to stress your parents out more. So you shove it down, distract yourself, joke about it, or just keep moving. On the outside you look "fine."

But shoved-down stuff doesn't disappear. It leaks out. You snap at people who don't deserve it. You feel numb or tired all the time. You avoid quiet moments because that's when your thoughts get loud. You know you're not okay, but it feels like there's nowhere safe to put all of it.

If prayer is just a quick line before bed or a memorized sentence before meals, it doesn't really touch any of that. But if prayer is a place to actually unload the weight you're carrying onto Someone strong enough to hold it, that changes everything.

Bible: First Peter 5:7 (NIV) says:

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

This verse sits in a bigger moment. In 1 Peter 5, Peter is writing to followers of Jesus who are under pressure. They're misunderstood, pushed to the margins, and living with real fear about their future and safety. Peter doesn't tell them, "Just toughen up." Instead, he teaches them a different way to live with that weight.

The verse right before this one says: *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time (1 Peter 5:6 NIV)* Then comes: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Humbling yourself and casting your anxiety go together. To "humble yourself" is to admit, "I can't carry this on my own. I need help." Casting is what that humility looks like in action.

The word "cast" here is the same idea as throwing a heavy blanket on a donkey or tossing your backpack onto someone else's shoulders. It's not gentle. It's intentional and decisive: "This is too heavy for me, so I'm putting it on You." Prayer, in this verse, isn't a polite religious habit. It's an honest act of transfer.

Notice two things Peter says:

1. Cast all your anxiety.

Not just the stuff that feels comfortable or safe. Not just the stuff that's easy to talk about. All of it. The anger you don't know what to do with. The panic that hits in the hallway. The jealousy you're ashamed of. The secret fear that you're not enough. God is not asking for a filtered report. He is inviting the whole messy list.

2. Because He cares for you.

This is the why behind the command. God isn't just powerful; He's personal. He doesn't say, "Cast your anxiety on Me so I can judge you for it." He says "because I care." His care is not an idea; it shows up in real ways:

- A sense of peace in prayer that doesn't match the situation.

5 min

Application (YOU)

What You Need

No supplies needed

- A nudge to reach out to a trusted adult, leader, or counselor.
- A Scripture that hits you at just the right time.
- A friend who checks in when you need it most.

In the story, prayer didn't replace counseling; it led to it. While praying, there was a sense: "You need someone to listen. Call the EAP." That's how God often works. Prayer is where you open your hands. Then God often answers by working through people, wisdom, and next steps.

This is what a deeper prayer life begins to look like:

- **Honesty:** You name your anxiety instead of hiding it.
- **Transfer:** You intentionally hand it to God: "I'm giving this to You. I can't carry it."
- **Trust:** You believe that even if nothing changes immediately, you're no longer carrying it alone.
- **Obedience:** When God nudges you toward a next step (talking to someone, changing a habit, getting help), you move.

Prayer sometimes doesn't magically erase every hard thing. The Bible is full of stories where God moved suddenly and mightily—and He still does that today! However, don't be discouraged when God doesn't answer all your prayers that way. The Bible is full of situations where the WAY God answered prayers was through a longer process.

The people Peter wrote to still faced persecution. You might still have the same schedule, the same family situation, the same group text. But when you cast your cares on God, the story over your anxiety changes from "It's all on me" to "I'm not carrying this by myself." And according to Peter, that shift happens not because you finally figured everything out, but because God cares more than you realize.

So what are you actually carrying right now? Not your safe answer. Your real answer.

Maybe it's:

- A secret you've been hiding that feels heavier every week.
- Fear about the future: college, money, your next step.
- Tension at home you don't talk about.
- A relationship or friendship that hurts more than it helps.
- Anxiety, sadness, or anger you feel guilty even feeling.

The invitation from 1 Peter 5:7 is incredibly simple and incredibly hard at the same time: **Don't carry it alone. Cast it.**

Here's a way to start:

1. **Write it.**

Name one thing in your Notes app or on paper: "Here's what I'm carrying: ____." Be specific.

2. **Pray it.**

Turn that line into a sentence to God: "God, I'm casting this on You because I can't carry it, and You care about me." You don't need poetic language. Just be honest.

3.

5 min

Landing (ME)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Listen.

Sit in silence for a full minute. Ask, "God, what do You want me to do with this?" Pay attention to any thought that lines up with His character: telling the truth, seeking help, forgiving, setting a boundary, resting, being honest with someone safe.

4. Act.

If a next step becomes clear—talk to a leader, ask a parent for help, reach out to a counselor, confess something, or simply keep praying about it—write it down and commit to doing it within the next 24 hours.

Casting doesn't mean you stop feeling. It means you stop pretending you're the only one responsible for holding everything together.

Interactive (in-room)

Invite students to grab their phones or a black index card. Walk them through this in real time:

1. "On your screen or card, finish this sentence: 'Here's what I'm carrying right now: ____.' Don't overthink it. Just be honest."
2. "Now, under that, write: 'God, I'm casting this on You because You care about me.'"
3. "Set a 3-minute timer. For the first 2 minutes, talk to God quietly about what you wrote—like you're unpacking a heavy backpack. For the last minute, sit still. Breathe slowly and ask, 'God, is there anything You want me to do with this?' If something good and wise comes to mind, write it as: 'My next step: ____.'"

Let them sit in that space. Afterward, remind them they can share their "next step" with a trusted leader if they want someone to walk it with them.

Every person in the room, no matter their age, personality, or story, is carrying something. Some are good at hiding it. Some joke about it. Some feel it so loudly they can't imagine life any other way.

The point of this message is not "be stronger" or "pretend it doesn't bother you." The point is this: **you were never designed to carry everything alone.**

When you choose to cast your cares on God, you're not being dramatic or weak. You're doing exactly what Scripture invites you to do. You are admitting, "I am not God. I am not built to hold all of this by myself." And you're trusting that the One who made you actually cares enough to carry what you can't.

You might walk out of this room to the same schedule, the same notifications, the same group chats, and the same pressures. But you don't have to walk out with the same weight on your shoulders. Prayer is not about impressing God. It's about trusting Him with what is already overwhelming you.

Wherever you are in your faith—curious, confused, close to Jesus, or somewhere in between—you can start here: one honest sentence, one choice to cast, one moment of letting God care for you.

Prayer

God, You see every person hearing this. You see the weight they're carrying, the things they've spoken out loud and the things they haven't told anyone. Thank You that You invite us to cast all our anxiety on You because You care for us.

Teach us to be honest when we pray. Help us stop pretending we're fine when we're not. Show us the next step for what we're carrying—whether that's asking someone for help, talking to a counselor, forgiving someone, or just coming back to You again tomorrow.

We give You what we can't carry alone. Hold us in it. Walk with us through it. In Jesus' name, amen.

37 min

Groups

2 min

Think About This

What You Need

No supplies needed

Help students see that their current “battles” are not automatic proof that something is wrong with them or with God. Instead, God can use battles to form who they’re becoming, even when the outcome feels uncertain.

Battle language hits different depending on a student’s story. For some, “battle” means busy schedule and hard classes. For others, it might mean grief, family chaos, mental health, or trauma. Your job is not to dig for pain but to make it safe to be honest.

A few coaching notes:

- Don’t force sharing. You can invite students to write privately first, then share only if they want.
- Draw a clear line between normal hard things (disappointment, conflict, uncertainty) and unsafe things (abuse, self-harm, suicidal thoughts). If a student hints at harm, follow your church’s safety / reporting process after group.
- Keep reminding them: God does not cause evil, but he does not waste battles.

Celebrate small, realistic faith steps: naming a battle, asking for help, praying honestly, not just “big wins.”

10 min

Discussion Questions (Core Questions)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These hit the heart of the week's content.)

Quick check-in:

"On a scale from 1 to 10, how 'battle mode' does life feel right now? 1 = 'pretty chill,' 10 = 'constant boss fight.' Share your number and one word for what's making it feel that way."

If you had to memorize one thing as intensely as London cab drivers memorize streets, what would you absolutely *not* want it to be and why?

1. What's something that looked easy from the outside until you actually tried it and realized it takes way more work or pressure?
2. When life gets stressful, are you more likely to talk it out, distract yourself, or pretend you're fine? Share a quick example (school, sports, friendships, home).
3. What's one place you feel pressure right now that most people probably don't see? (You don't have to go into details, just name the area: school, family, faith, future, etc.)
4. Be honest: when things get hard, what's usually your first thought: "I've got this," "I'm failing," or "I have no idea what I'm doing"?
5. Read 1 Samuel 17:47 (NIV): "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's..."
What's your first reaction to that idea that "the battle is the LORD's"?
6. If you had to put your current life into one of these categories, which fits best and why:
 - "Training mode" (hard but you know you're growing)
 - "Survival mode" (just trying to get through)

10 min

Discussion Questions (Dive Deep)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These dig into the Bible, context, and theology in student language.)

1. Read 1 Samuel 17:45–47 (NIV) together. What stands out most to you about the way David talks to Goliath and about God?
2. In verse 47 David says, “The battle is the LORD’s.” What changes when someone really believes that, versus living like everything depends on them?
3. Think about your own life: if you’re comfortable sharing, what kind of battle are you facing right now:
 - Internal (anxiety, temptation, doubt, identity)
 - Relational (friends, dating, family, drama)
 - Circumstantial (school, money, health, future)
 How does it affect you day to day?
4. Instead of only asking, “Why is this happening to me?”, what might it look like to ask, “God, what are You forming in me through this?” Based on your situation, what is *one* thing God *might* be shaping (courage, patience, humility, dependence, empathy, trust)?
5. Why is it important to understand that God uses battles for formation but does *not* cause evil or cruelty? How does that protect how you see God’s character?
6. Read Luke 22:42 (NIV): “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” What do you notice about Jesus’ honesty and surrender here? What might “not my will, but yours” look like for a high school student this week?
7. The teaching said, “On the other side of battles, there are often gifts we couldn’t receive any other way.” What are some “gifts” people often find on the other side of hard seasons (endurance, empathy, wisdom, deeper faith, etc.)? Which one do you hope comes from your current battle?

10 min

Discussion Questions (Culture Questions)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These connect the topic to real life and the world students live in.)

1. How does social media make battles harder to walk through, especially when it feels like everyone else's life looks easier, happier, or more successful than yours?
2. Our culture often says struggle = weakness or failure. How does that message clash with David's story, or with Jesus in the garden, or with the idea that God uses battles to form us?
3. Where do you see people trying to "fake it" through battles instead of being honest about what they're facing (online, at school, even at church)? How does that pressure to look fine affect you?
4. If you turned your current battle into a story people could watch, what parts would be easy to show (public moments), and what parts would you be tempted to hide (private thoughts, feelings, fears)?
5. The lesson compared battles to "training." In your world, what do people usually do when training gets hard: lean in, quit, cheat, lower the bar, or pretend they never cared? How does that mindset creep into faith too?
6. Imagine a friend texted you, "I'm done. I'm tired of fighting this." What is one honest, Jesus-centered response that isn't a cliché, but actually offers hope and presence?
7. Looking at the week ahead, what's one small, practical way you can walk through your battle *with* Jesus instead of by yourself? (Examples: short daily prayer, reading a Psalm, texting a trusted friend, asking for help, choosing one obedience step.)

5 min

Try This

What You Need

No supplies needed

Pick a time each day this week—same time, same place.

1. Set a **3-minute** timer.
2. First **2 minutes**: Tell God what's on your mind like you're unpacking your backpack at the end of the day—item by item, talking to Him about everything that felt heavy, stressful, or confusing.
3. Last **1 minute**: Sit quietly and repeat in your head, "You care for me."

If a helpful thought or next step comes to mind, write it down and tell a trusted adult or leader before the day is over. Don't carry it alone.

Resources

Teaching Outline

What You Need

No supplies needed

HS LESSON OUTLINE / Beyond / WK 1 1 Samuel 17:45-47

Bottom Line: The Gift Is on the Other Side of the Battle

INTRO (ME)

- London black cab drivers do not use GPS
- Must pass "The Knowledge"
 - 25,000+ streets and landmarks
 - Takes 3-4 years
 - Many quit
- Neuroscience studies show:
 - Cab drivers' navigation centers grow larger
 - More challenge = more growth
 - Growth continues over time
- Point:
 - Difficulty does not mean something is wrong.
 - Challenge literally shapes capacity.
- Life connection:
 - Hard seasons make us question ourselves and God.
 - Battles test identity, trust, and belief.
- Framing question:
 - What if the battle you're in is part of how God is forming you?

TENSION (WE)

- High school pressure is real
 - Academics
 - Future decisions
 -

Image and expectations

- Stress levels for teens rival adults
- Common assumptions:
 - If God were present, this wouldn't be hard.
 - Strong faith means fewer battles.
- Jesus' words (John 16:33):
 - Trouble is expected, not avoided.
- Core tension:
 - Battles are inevitable.
 - The question is how we interpret them.

TRUTH (GOD)

- David and Goliath as case study
- Goliath represents:
 - Intimidation
 - Power
 - Certainty
- Israel had strength, but lacked trust
- David's declaration (1 Samuel 17:47 NIV):
 - *"The battle is the LORD's."*
- Key shift:
 - Ownership moves from self to God.
 - Fear loses authority.
 - Identity is not defined by outcome.
- Important clarification:
 - David's story did not end with Goliath.
 - Years of battles followed
- Biblical pattern:

- Joseph's suffering shaped leadership.
- Moses' wilderness shaped humility.
- David's battles shaped kingship.
- Core truth:
 - God does not waste battles.
 - He uses them to form who you are becoming.

APPLICATION (YOU)

- Identify one current battle
 - Internal
 - Relational
 - Circumstantial
- Invitation to honesty with God
- Jesus in Gethsemane (Luke 22:42):
 - Honest prayer
 - Willing surrender
- Reframe the question:
 - Not "Why is this happening?"
 - But "What are You forming in me?"
- Possible gifts on the other side:
 - Endurance
 - Empathy
 - Discernment
 - Humility
 - Deeper faith
- One intentional step this week:
 - Have the conversation
 - Ask for help

- Practice self-control
- Pray honestly
- Reminder:
 - Painful does not mean pointless
 - This battle may be formative

LANDING (ME)

- Growth rarely comes from easy seasons.
- Formation happens in perseverance.
- Examples revisited:
 - David
 - London cab drivers
- Final encouragement:
 - Your battle does not disqualify you.
 - It may be shaping you.
- Bottom line restated:
 - The Gift on the Other Side of the Battle