



Series Study Guide



When you are faced with a “giant,” how do you respond? Encountering giants of intimidation, family dysfunction, and spiritual blindness often reveals our level of spiritual and emotional maturity. It’s one thing to grow into a physically mature adult, but it’s an entirely different ordeal to grow into an emotionally mature adult. Chronological growth does not always keep pace with emotional growth. In fact, some of the most daunting giants we face in our lifetime may be the ones that reside within us.

As we begin this series, we encourage you to utilize the emotional assessment from *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Pete Scazzero with Warren Bird that is included at the end of this packet. This brief survey will help you evaluate your level of spiritual/emotional maturity.

Some of the questions in the assessment may make you feel uneasy, but try to be honest about yourself. This resource will reveal nothing about you that is a surprise to God – He loves you immensely as you already are right now. After you take the assessment, refer back to it throughout the message series as a spiritual gauge. Look for patterns of behavior and pray that God will give you the courage and resources you need to face the giants in your life. This assessment will also serve as a guide throughout the spiritual practices in this study.



SESSION 1



READ

1 Samuel 17:1-11

What intimidates you? For the Israelites, it was not so much a physical giant as it was the threat the giant was against their very identity as God's people. This battle was much more than it appears on the surface. David and Goliath weren't the key players; they were merely the representatives of their respective gods. This was a showdown between Israel's God, Yahweh, and the Philistines' god, Dagon.

Everything is at stake for the Israelites. If they lose, it proves their God also loses. It means Yahweh isn't the powerful God they thought He was. It also means they, the recipients of Yahweh's covenant, are not the people they thought they were, either.

What are the things in your life that give you anxiety about God's sovereignty? What are some things that give you anxiety about your relationship with God? Take a look at Part A ("General Formation and Discipleship") of your emotional health assessment. How did you score? When you think about your discipleship growth, what parts intimidate you? What are you afraid will happen when you go deeper in your faith – that you'll disappoint God? That God will disappoint you? That you'll fail? That you'll realize how much work you still need God to do in you? That you'll uncover just how much of an imposter you are?

Lay all these things that intimidate you down at God's feet today. The battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47). Sit before God in silence. Trust that God will fight for you. Rest in His love for you.



PRAY

"I thank you, Lord Jesus, for becoming a human being so I do not have to pretend or try to be a God. I thank you, Lord Jesus, for becoming finite and limited, so I do not have to pretend I am infinite and limitless. I thank you, crucified God, for becoming mortal so that I do not have to try to make myself immortal.

"I thank you, Lord Jesus, for becoming inferior, so I do not have to pretend I am superior to anyone. I thank you for becoming weak, so I don't have to be strong. I thank you for being willing to be considered imperfect and strange, so I do not have to be perfect and normal. I thank you, Lord Jesus, for being willing to be disapproved of, so I do not have to try so hard to be approved and liked. I thank you for being considered a failure, so I do not have to give my life trying to pretend I am a success."

(Rohr, Richard and John Feister. *Hope Against Darkness*:

The Transforming Vision of St. Francis in an Age of Anxiety. Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2001.)