

Study 2: Confidence Through Past Faithfulness

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 17:34-37

"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 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.'"

Understanding the Power of Remembrance

One of the most powerful weapons against fear and discouragement is remembering God's past faithfulness. When we face new challenges, our natural tendency is to focus on the size of the current problem rather than the size of our God who has already proven Himself faithful. David's confidence before Goliath wasn't based on his own strength or skill—it was anchored in his memory of God's previous deliverances.

David's Pattern of Remembrance and Application

The Private Victories That Prepared for Public Triumph

David's encounter with Goliath wasn't his first battle—it was the culmination of faithful service in seemingly insignificant moments. Consider the progression:

1. The Solitary Shepherd's Field

- David faced lions and bears while protecting his father's sheep
- No one was watching or applauding
- These weren't optional battles—the sheep's lives depended on his courage
- God's deliverance in these moments built David's confidence for greater challenges

2. The Public Arena

- When the entire army of Israel was paralyzed by fear, David stepped forward
- He didn't rely on conventional weapons or armor
- His confidence came from remembering: "The same God who delivered me then will deliver me now"

Key Principle: God often uses private victories to prepare us for public challenges. The struggles you face today may be preparation for greater purposes tomorrow.

David's Three-Step Process for Building Confidence

Step 1: Detailed Recall - David didn't just remember vaguely; he recounted specific details of God's deliverance
Step 2: Recognition of God's Role - He attributed his victory to "the Lord who rescued me," not his own ability

Step 3: Present Application - He connected past faithfulness to current challenges: "will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine"

Biblical Examples of Remembrance Building Confidence

Moses and the Israelites at the Red Sea

Exodus 14:13-14: *"Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.'"*

Moses drew confidence from remembering:

- God's power displayed through the plagues
- God's protection during the Passover
- God's guidance through the pillar of cloud and fire
- This gave him confidence to trust God for an impossible situation

Joshua's Charge to Remember

Joshua 4:20-24: After crossing the Jordan River, Joshua set up stones as a memorial, saying: *"In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over... He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."*

Purpose of Remembrance:

- To remind future generations of God's faithfulness
- To build confidence for upcoming battles in the Promised Land
- To maintain reverence and trust in God's power

Paul's Testimony of Past Deliverance

2 Corinthians 1:8-10: *"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us."*

Paul's confidence pattern:

- **Honest acknowledgment** of the severity of past trials
- **Recognition** that deliverance came from God, not human effort
- **Application** to future challenges: "he will deliver us again"

Categories of God's Past Faithfulness to Remember

1. Provision in Times of Need

Examples to reflect on:

- Times when finances were tight, but needs were met
- When food, shelter, or basic necessities appeared unexpectedly
- Job opportunities that came at just the right moment
- Health restored when medical solutions weren't enough

Scripture: *"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19)

2. Protection from Harm

Examples to reflect on:

- Accidents that could have been much worse
- Dangerous situations where you were kept safe
- Times when you were protected from poor decisions
- Relationships or opportunities that God prevented you from pursuing

Scripture: *"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them"* (Psalm 34:7)

3. Guidance in Decision-Making

Examples to reflect on:

- Times when the right path became clear after prayer
- Doors that opened or closed at the right time
- Wisdom received through Scripture, counsel, or circumstances
- Career, relationship, or life decisions that proved beneficial

Scripture: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight"* (Proverbs 3:5-6)

4. Strength in Weakness

Examples to reflect on:

- Ability to endure grief or loss beyond your natural strength
- Peace during anxious seasons
- Courage to do what seemed impossible
- Grace to forgive when it felt impossible

Scripture: *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'"* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

5. Redemption from Failure

Examples to reflect on:

- Restoration after moral failures or poor choices
- Second chances in relationships or career
- Good brought from painful mistakes
- Character growth through difficult seasons

Scripture: *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"* (Romans 8:28)

The Science of Remembrance: Why It Works

Neurological Impact

Research shows that recalling positive experiences and victories:

- Activates the same neural pathways as the original experience
- Releases similar neurotransmitters that create feelings of confidence and hope
- Builds neural patterns that make future confidence more accessible

Spiritual Impact

Biblically, remembrance:

- **Aligns our perspective** with God's faithfulness rather than current circumstances
- **Builds faith** by rehearsing God's proven character
- **Creates gratitude** which shifts our emotional state
- **Establishes patterns** of trust that become stronger over time

Overcoming Common Obstacles to Remembering

"But This Situation is Different/Bigger"

David's Response: The lion and bear seemed different from Goliath, but David recognized the same God was involved **Truth:** While circumstances change, God's character and power remain

constant **Application:** Ask "How is God the same in this situation as He was before?" rather than focusing on how the situation is different

"I Can't Remember Any Big Miracles"

Truth: God's faithfulness often comes through ordinary provisions and protection, not just dramatic interventions **Application:** Look for daily mercies—health, breath, provision, relationships, opportunities **Scripture:** *"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning"* (Lamentations 3:22-23)

"Those Were Just Coincidences"

David's Response: He attributed his victories to "the Lord who rescued me," not luck or skill

Truth: When we habitually give God credit for good things, we build a foundation of remembered faithfulness **Application:** Practice attributing positive outcomes to God's faithfulness rather than chance.