

## David Slays Goliath

**Lesson Scope:** [1 Samuel 17](#)

### Lesson Focus

According to 1 Samuel 17:15, David had returned to care for his father's sheep after being Saul's armor-bearer and playing the harp to soothe the king's troubled spirit.

The Philistines had amassed a large force to move against Israel. Now the armies were facing each other from separate mountains, with a valley between. David's three oldest brothers had followed Saul to the battle. Now Jesse sent David to see how his brothers were faring. When David arrived at the place where Israel's army was camped, he found them fearful and cowering before the enemy. For forty days, Goliath had been challenging Israel to send a man to fight with him, and neither Saul nor any of his men had accepted the challenge.

When David heard Goliath's boastful challenge, he saw the issue from a different perspective. His understanding of God's cause moved him to challenge this defiant enemy of God's people. David's faith in God set him apart from his fellow Israelites.

God's enemies blaspheme His Name and defy His cause. But men of faith and courage can overcome every giant of opposition "in the name of the LORD of hosts."

This lesson should be inspirational. Read the lesson scope and be familiar with the contents. Make the lesson practical to New Testament Christian living. Lessons can be learned from David's response to Eliab's accusation and Saul's fearful response. The submission David showed in feeding his father's sheep after serving an "important" role in the king's house shows us an example of true humility.

**Lesson Aim:** To present principles for victory in times of crisis.

**Theme Verse:** [Revelation 12:11](#). And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

## Lesson Text

### Goliath's Challenge

1 Samuel 17:4 <sup>4</sup> And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

### David's Vision

1 Samuel 17:26-29 <sup>26</sup> And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? <sup>27</sup> And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. <sup>28</sup> And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. <sup>29</sup> And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?

1 Samuel 17:32 <sup>32</sup> And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

1 Samuel 17:37-40 <sup>37</sup> David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee. <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> 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.

### The Lord's Victory

1 Samuel 17:45-52 <sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>46</sup> 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. <sup>47</sup> 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. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> 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. <sup>50</sup> 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. <sup>51</sup> 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. <sup>52</sup> And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Goliath's Challenge**

1. How successful was Goliath in accomplishing the Philistines' intended purpose?
2. How does Satan use intimidation against God's people today?

### **David's Vision**

3. In what ways did David show a right spirit when responding to Eliab and Saul?
4. What things contributed to David's courage?
5. How can we identify the "Eliabs" and "Sauls" in our day?

### **The Lord's Victory**

6. In what sense was this battle "the LORD'S"?
7. Explain the effects of David's victory.
8. What preparations are necessary for victory in life's crises?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

To defy (1 Samuel 17:10) is to reproach, disgrace, or bring shame upon.

The Israelites were terrified and humiliated by Goliath's challenge.

"Is there not a cause?" (1 Samuel 17:29) meant "Is there not a reason?" David had left his father's sheep and come to his brothers in obedience to his father. He was asking questions about Goliath because he thought someone should take away the reproach from Israel.

David saw Goliath for who he was, a godless Philistine who defied the people of God. David did not cower in fear because of Goliath's size, arrogant speech, or massive weaponry; he knew they were no match for God's power.

"I have not proved them" (1 Samuel 17:39) meant that David had not tested Saul's armor. David did not say they were useless or inferior but that he was unable to use them with confidence.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Goliath's Challenge**

1. Properly identifying the opposition prepares us for victory (1 Samuel 17:4). Just as David identified Goliath as a Philistine and an enemy to God's people, we need to identify our enemies and face them rather than become intimidated. Sometimes the greatest danger comes from those who pose as friends or as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). A good understanding of the Scriptures will help us discern the truth.

### **David's Vision**

2. Carefully evaluating the enemy contributes to victory (1 Samuel 17:26). David not only identified the enemy but also evaluated Goliath's weakness. He saw how vulnerable Goliath was because he trusted in his own strength. Unless we move beyond identifying the enemy and avail ourselves of God's power, we will flee in fear as most of Israel did.

3. Refusing to take personal offense from misunderstandings and criticism prepares one for victory in times of crisis (1 Samuel 17:28-29). David did not allow the criticism of others to hinder him in the Lord's work. His father's wishes had brought him to the army to inquire about the battle.

Criticism can often be helpful, but we need to evaluate it. We do not need to answer hostile criticism with an argument; we should quietly continue following God.

4. The ability to perceive the cause at stake equips one for victory (17:29). David saw Goliath not only as a threat to his freedom but also

as a disgrace to God's people and a reproach to God Himself. This was a cause worth fighting for.

A sense that spiritual danger threatens our families or churches gives us strong incentive to do whatever needs to be done. Great sacrifices spring from such motivation.

5. A personal willingness to be involved in the fight can inspire others (1 Samuel 17:32). Fear paralyzed the men of Israel, but David's courageous action inspired them. Often a godly example does more than a great testimony to convince people of what God can do. God can do a great work in this world when His people believe Him and step out in faith.

6. Past victories give us courage to press on in current conflicts (1 Samuel 17:37). Like David, we can substantiate our present confidence in God with examples of what He has done for us in the past. If God helped us then, He will aid us now. "Each vict'ry will help you some other to win."

7. Victory is possible as we employ tried and proven methods (1 Samuel 17:38–40). David felt uncomfortable using Saul's armor, but his experience in using his sling gave him confidence. We benefit by being slow to accept new ways of doing things in church life; let them prove their value first. The primary tools for victory are unwavering faith and simple obedience to God. The more often we use these, the more confidence we will have for victory.

### **The Lord's Victory**

8. Victory is assured when we go forth in the Name of the Lord, knowing that the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:45, 47). When we surrender all to God and allow Him to lead, He can do marvelous things with our feeble efforts. It is not our battle; we do not need to prove our position, our prowess, or our point. When the battle is the Lord's, we can bear disgrace rather than see others disgrace God and His Name. We are careful to behave wisely so as not to give God's enemies occasion to blaspheme Him.

9. Victory is attained as we aggressively face the enemy (1 Samuel 17:48-49). The Christian warfare is not simply defensive; we must actively resist the enemy. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). A victorious Christian puts off the works of the flesh, mortifies the deeds of the body, and walks in the Spirit.

10. Personal diligence provides group incentive to become involved in the battle (1 Samuel 17:52). Israel's army was paralyzed with dread when David went forth to meet Goliath, but when they saw that God was using him, they joined David to win a mighty victory. Why does it seem easier for us to trust God when someone else leads the way? How much more could God accomplish if we would more often take the initiative by faith?

### **Important Teachings**

1. Properly identifying the opposition prepares us for victory (1 Samuel 17:4).
2. Carefully evaluating the enemy contributes to victory (1 Samuel 17:26).
3. Refusing to take personal offense from misunderstandings and criticism prepares one for victory in times of crisis (1 Samuel 17:28-29).
4. The ability to perceive the cause at stake equips one for victory (1 Samuel 17:29).
5. A personal willingness to be involved in the fight can inspire others (1 Samuel 17:32).
6. Past victories give us courage to press on in current conflicts (1 Samuel 17:37).
7. Victory is possible as we employ tried and proven methods (1 Samuel 17:38-40).
8. Victory is assured when we go forth in the Name of the Lord, knowing that the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:45-47).
9. Victory is attained as we aggressively face the enemy (1 Samuel 17:48-49).
10. Personal diligence provides group incentive to become involved in the battle (1 Samuel 17:52).

### **Answers to Questions**

*1. How successful was Goliath in accomplishing the Philistines' intended purpose?*

The Philistines' purpose was to demoralize Israel's army so that they could more easily be defeated, possibly even without a general battle. Goliath's challenge filled Saul's men with fear, a fear that grew more

paralyzing as the days passed. If David had not acted in faith, Israel would certainly have been defeated.

*2. How does Satan use intimidation against God's people today?*

Satan intimidates through the scorn of the worldly-educated toward those with a simple faith in God and His Word. He intimidates through society's disfavor of large families and the use of the rod in discipline. He intimidates through fear that God will not meet our needs without insurance and government subsidies.

*3. In what ways did David show a right spirit when responding to Eliab and Saul?*

David did not get angry or defiant when Eliab rebuked him. He simply asked, "What have I now done?" When Saul questioned his ability to fight the giant, David pointed Saul to his powerful God. David did not boast about what he had done or could do; he simply reported what God had done and could do.

*4. What things contributed to David's courage?*

David's close walk with God helped him see clearly that the real conflict was between God and the heathen Philistines. Goliath had challenged Israel and their God; the Lord was looking for a willing man to answer that challenge. David remembered God's marvelous deliverance from the lion and the bear. He was well practiced with his sling. He had faith that the Lord would give him the victory.

*5. How can we identify the "Eliabs" and "Sauls" in our day?*

Eliab's words were motivated by envy, and Saul was motivated by fear. Both men lacked the faith that David had. We can identify the Eliabs and Sauls by their humanistic reasoning in an effort to sidetrack us from obedience to Biblical principles.

*6. In what sense was this battle "the Lord's"?*

The Lord's honor and reputation were at stake. God was ready to give Israel the victory through a man of faith who was willing to accept Goliath's challenge.

*7. Explain the effects of David's victory.*

Everyone present knew clearly that God had given David the victory. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, their impulse was to run for their lives. Apparently their courage had depended on Goliath. David's victory restored the courage of the Israelite army; they joined in hot pursuit of the fleeing Philistines.

### 8. *What preparations are necessary for victory in life's crises?*

To prepare for victory in life's crises, we must understand our own weakness and tendency to respond with doubts and fear. We must walk with God obediently day by day so that, when crises come, we have strong confidence that He is present and ready to meet our need. We prepare by choosing to resign ourselves to God's will when He allows financial reverses, illness, and loss of loved ones.

### **Research Guide**

1. Look up the word *champion* in *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*. Compare the word used in 1 Samuel 17:4, 23 with the word used in 17:51.
2. On a map locate the places mentioned in the chapter.
3. Read 2 Samuel 21:15-22 and 1 Chronicles 20:5-8 for information on Goliath's family.
4. Read Numbers 14:6-10 for inspiration from the faith of Joshua and Caleb.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

#### **Faith Is the Victory**

Encamped along the hills of light,  
Ye Christian soldiers, rise,  
And press the battle ere the night  
Shall veil the glowing skies.

Against the foe in vales below  
Let all our strength be hurled;  
Faith is the victory, we know,  
That overcomes the world.

His banner over us is love,  
Our sword the Word of God;  
We tread the road the saints above  
With shouts of triumph trod.



By faith they, like a whirlwind's breath,  
Swept on o'er ev'ry field;  
The faith by which they conquered Death  
Is still our shining shield.

To him that overcomes the foe,  
White raiment shall be giv'n;  
Before the angels he shall know  
His name confessed in heav'n.

Then onward from the hills of light,  
Our hearts with love aflame,  
We'll vanquish all the hosts of night,  
In Jesus' conqu'ring name.

—John H. Yates