



## eLesson 002

Text: 1 Samuel 17

Subject: Victory

# Our Goliaths

When I was a young boy, I thought about David fighting Goliath. I pictured a slight ten-year-old shepherd boy defeating the giant warrior ... and doing it with just a toy sling. However, now that I am older I do not find that version of the story in the Bible. The real Biblical account is more exciting. Moreover, it is much more challenging and much more convicting.

**Context** is very important in this ... as it is in all Bible study. Think about the context. David conquered Goliath after he was chosen to be King in I Samuel 16. However, this battle was before he actually became king. He was a shepherd, 16:11. He was a youth, 17:33. Nevertheless, that did not mean that he was a small boy. He was probably below the 20-year-old minimum age for serving in the military, Numbers 1:45. He might have been 18 or 19 years old. Before his battle with Goliath, David had protected and rescued his father's sheep from a bear and a lion. He had seized them by their beards and killed them, I Samuel 17:34-36. Also before his battle with Goliath, David was described as, *"A skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him."* I Samuel 16:18. After King Saul agreed that David would fight Goliath, he offered his armor to David. It was probably the right size for David. And what about that toy weapon? Actually, it was far from a toy. Slings were proven weapons of war, Judges 20:14-17, II Chronicles 26:14-15.

**His private life made his public life possible.** God chose David to be the next king of Israel because of his private life ... *"for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"*, I Samuel 16:7. In David's private life at that time, he was a man after God's own heart. While tending sheep alone on a hillside in Judea, did he bemoan his lot in life as the eighth son who always was stuck with the sheep? Or did he marvel at the creation around him that displayed God's invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature? Did he look at the vast starlit sky and feel the gloom of loneliness? Or did he see the heavens telling of the glory of God? Read Psalm 19 if you have any doubt about how David dealt with his private circumstances. His public victory over Goliath was the product of routine faithfulness in his private life. As Jesus said, *"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."* Luke 16:10.

**A very big visible enemy** ... that was Goliath. He was over nine feet (3 meters) tall and wore over 100 pounds (45 kg) of armor. His spear weighed more than 30 pounds (13 kg). A second man walked in front of him to carry his shield. Every morning and every evening Goliath stepped out of the ranks of the Philistines to taunt and mock the armies of Saul. Do you have a Goliath in your life? Is it health? Is it a financial problem? Is it the death of a loved one? Does your Goliath taunt and mock you every morning and evening? Sometimes all of us have to face and fight a Goliath. However, life is seldom simple. Goliath is seldom alone.

**Other enemies** were there that day for David in the valley of Elah. Any of those other enemies could have defeated him. David had to face the inner enemy of unrealized potential. David was young and had been anointed as the next king. However, he was just a shepherd ... not the king. The spirit of the Lord was mightily upon him. The Lord was with him. However, that day he was

just an errand boy. David was bringing grain, bread and cheese to his older brothers ... the so-called real soldiers. David knew that he was capable of so much more than his present responsibilities. However, it was not his time. God had not yet exalted him. He also faced the enemy of family disapproval. In chapter 16 his father Jesse brought David's seven brothers for Samuel to choose the next king ... overlooking David ... leaving him out with the flocks. In chapter 17, his oldest brother, Eliab, heard that David was in the camp of the Israelite army, and he was angry with David. Eliab, sounding very much like an older brother, confronted David with the words ... *"Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."* I Samuel 17:28. Can't you hear his condescending tone as he belittled David's tending just a few sheep ... as he called him insolent and wicked ... and as he mocked him as a curious onlooker? Does that sound like your family? Do you feel alone as they overlook you ... as they disapprove of you ... or as they mock your faith? Remember, Jesus said that would happen, Matthew 10:35-37. David also had to face the enemy of a disheartened army. The army of Israel stood on one side of the valley of Elah. The armies of the Philistines stood on the other. They were dressed in battle array ... uniformed and armed with weapons ... shouting the war cry. However, nobody fought Goliath. Saul and the army of Israel were dismayed and afraid. They ran from the battle. Unfortunately, some of today's Christian leaders and groups are just like that. They are dressed in battle array. They wear the uniforms. They shout the war cry. However, they never get around to actually fighting Goliath. They are only playing soldier. Some do not even carry their swords anymore, Ephesians 6:17. Actually, I am not sure that some even see Goliath. Do not let a disheartened army take you out of the real battle. We are in a serious war ... a war against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

**Victory came from a right heart.** David's question revealed so much about his heart. He asked, *"For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?"* 17:26. David saw Goliath as unclean ... uncircumcised of flesh and of heart, Jeremiah 4:4, Deuteronomy 10:6, 30:6. Moreover, David had a different view of the army of Israel than the army had of themselves. To David they were the army of the living God, I Samuel 17:26, 36, 45. David also had the right view of his previous victories. He knew that each victory was from the Lord, I Samuel 17:37. David was not self-confident. He was God-confident. David was humanly outnumbered, outgunned, and out experienced. However, as David said, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?"* Psalm 27:1. Are those your words too?

**Is your heart like David's heart?** Listen to his words to Goliath, *"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hand."* I Samuel 17:45-47. Those words from David's heart were the last words that Goliath heard. As Jesus said, *"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."* Luke 6:45. What is your Goliath hearing today? Do not let him taunt you ... you are a soldier of the living God.

**Be careful of over-confidence.** Do not rest on past victories. The battles will continue until you are called home to be with the Lord. Young David was a man after God's own heart. That is why God chose him to be king. Later, as king, he sent his armies out to fight for him. He stayed home and sinned with Bathsheba. However, his past victories did not excuse him from his present responsibility. From that day on, his life was filled with the consequences of his sin. He was never again described as a man after God's own heart. *"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."* I Corinthians 10:12. Do not be self-confident. Always be God-confident. Face your Goliath. Face your Goliaths. For the battle is the Lord's! Your battles are the Lord's.

## Study Questions

Answers at end of lesson.

1. Describe David before he fought Goliath.

Chosen to be \_\_\_\_\_.

His occupation was \_\_\_\_\_.

His age was \_\_\_\_\_.

His previous victories were against \_\_\_\_\_.

As a musician, he was \_\_\_\_\_.

His courage was \_\_\_\_\_.

His battle skills were those of a \_\_\_\_\_.

In his communication skills, he was \_\_\_\_\_.

His personal appearance was \_\_\_\_\_.

He was accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_.

2. How would you describe young David's private life?

3. How do you think David reacted to the loneliness of his shepherd-life?

4. How big was Goliath?

5. Saul offered his armor to David ... probably being of the same physical size. Saul's height is described in 1 Samuel 9:2. Therefore, what was the probable height of David?

6. Name five enemies that David faced that day at the frontline.

7. Describe David's perception of Goliath.

8. Describe David's perception of the army of Israel.

9. Why did David not fear Goliath?

10. Put David's words to Goliath in your own words ... as if you were speaking to him.

**Personal Reflection** No answers provided for these questions.

1. How would you compare your external life to that of David?

2. How would you compare your inner life to that of David?

3. How do you respond to loneliness? How should you?

4. What is your present Goliath?

5. How should you perceive your Goliath?

6. What other enemies do you face?

7. What should you do to conquer your fear?

8. How will you face your enemies?

9. How will you not be self-confident?

## Answers to Study Questions

1. David was...

Chosen to be king.

His occupation was shepherd.

His age was possibly 18 or 19 years old.

His previous victories were against a bear and a lion.

As a musician, he was skillful.

His courage was that of a mighty man.

His battle skills were those of a warrior.

In his communication skills, he was prudent.

His personal appearance was handsome.

He was accompanied by the Lord.

2. He was a man of God in his private life.

3. He did not see his alone time as lonely ... but as time alone with God.

4. Goliath was a formidable enemy ... over nine feet (three meters) tall.

5. Saul was tall ... a full head taller than others. David was probably the same.

6. David's enemies included Goliath, his own unrealized potential, his lack of position (being an errand boy instead of soldier or king), his family's disapproval and mockery, and a disheartened army (his faithless peer group).

7. David saw Goliath as unclean.

8. David saw the army of Israel as the army of the living God.

9. By seeing the Lord as his light, salvation, and defense.

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