



## DAVID AND GOLIATH • God Provides a Champion for His People

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

1 Samuel 17:1-58

If you've ever watched sports, you've heard the term "underdog." If you watch sports enough, you have probably heard an announcer or two say, "We have a David and Goliath match today." (And if you are a Buffalo Bills fan, you know that you are never Goliath.) In 1 Samuel 17, we witness the original underdog story – the actual battle between David and Goliath. David is the true underdog, a teenager who has no battle experience, and he's facing a giant who is probably a bit scarier than your average soldier.

Last lesson, we finished off with the Spirit of God rushing upon David as He leaves Saul. As our narrative continues, we see yet another battle against the rival Philistines. This time, the Philistines have a new champion named Goliath, a 10-foot tall man who would dominate the WWE and possibly even beat up Chuck Norris. Understandably, no one in Israel wants to fight him. But God, as the ever-present hero, raises up David, a young shepherd boy, to take down Goliath and become Israel's champion. This chapter should stir our passion for the honor of God's name and should cause us to look forward to the day when God will raise up Jesus, the ultimate Champion, who will defeat the terrible, sinful giants in our life.

#### Goliath's Challenge (17:1-11)

As the Israelites and Philistines were facing each other, each army on a mountain side, Goliath came out of the Philistine camp. He probably looked like a Transformer with his helmet, mail coat, shin guards, and javelin. Goliath yelled across the valley at the Israelites and mocked them saying, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together" (v. 10). Being 10-feet tall and the Philistine champion, you would think Goliath had room to talk. His challenge sent shivers down the spines of the Israelite soldiers. Here is the primary problem of our passage. Instead of looking to God Almighty, who rescued the Israelites from Egypt, the Red Sea, and the wilderness, they cower in fear to another man! By nature, we are passive creatures who doubt God's strength in tough circumstances. Thankfully, God doesn't let all of His people put their tails between their legs. He stirs David to see God's name honored.

#### Who is this Uncircumcised Philistine? (17:12-30)

When David arrives at the scene, three of his brothers had already gone to battle with Saul. But there was not much fighting going on: Goliath came forward morning and evening shouting his challenge for 40 days (v. 16). David was told by his father to take food to his brothers and when He arrives at the

### What's the Big Idea?

After placing His Spirit on David, God displays His power and glory through him by empowering David to defeat Goliath. In the midst of weakness, God provides a champion to save His people. This chapter looks forward to the day when Jesus will become our ultimate champion, defeating our sin and the forces of evil in the world.

### What's the Problem?

We are passive people who usually recoil in the face of danger because we lack trust in God to provide a way out.



Israelite camp, he hears Goliath speak for the first time. The men of Israel are still afraid and David, being the curious teenager, asks, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach of Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (v. 26). This doesn’t go over too well with David’s brother Eliab. Eliab thinks David has evil in his heart. David quips back, “What have I done now? Was it not but a word?” (v. 29). Sure looks like sibling rivalry to me. Perhaps Eliab is jealous that David has some fuel in his fire. No one else in Israel said, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?” But David did. He was passionate about God being honored and knew that Goliath was a mere man who had no power over the Most High God. This is a key element in our narrative. We should be fervent about God’s holiness and the honor of His name. Make sure your group understands the importance of being people who, like David, will be courageous and faithful when nobody else will.

#### David Volunteers to Take on Goliath (17:31-58)

Despite opposition from his family and from King Saul (v. 33), David volunteers to slay Goliath. He’s pretty confident. As a shepherd, David killed lions and bears to protect his flock. Goliath will be no different, he said. Extreme courage and faith help David prepare. He declares, “This uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of [the lions and bears], for he has defied the armies of the living God” (v. 36). David tells Saul that God will deliver him.

Most people imagine David as a scrawny little boy, but if he was able to kill lions and bears, he must have had a few muscles on his teenage frame. We are told in verse 38 that after Saul is convinced to let David fight, he tries to give David his own armor. Now, Saul is a big guy (see 9:2), so David must also be a sizeable young man. This is purely speculative, but it’s not without reason since Saul is going to send him out with his own armor. David’s reaction is skeptical, however. He hasn’t tested the armor and decides to go only with his sling and five smooth stones. He approaches Goliath and after being insulted, David shouts, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with 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 defied” (v. 45). This is the bedrock for David’s courage. As you know, he hits Goliath with the first stone. Goliath then falls to the ground and David cuts off his head. The underdog killed the giant.

#### Conclusion

This is one of the most well-known biblical stories. But it is so much more than a story. In our passage, God provided salvation for Israel in their dark hour through David. God is faithful to His people by raising up a champion who defeats the overwhelming giant. Lead your group to see that God has raised up the ultimate Champion in Jesus who has provided salvation for us amidst our overwhelming giant – sin. When the situation looked insurmountable, Christ came and won the battle for God’s people. Pray that your group would worship and praise God for this great truth.

#### What’s Our Response?

Like David, we should have a passion for the honor of God’s name and trust in His ability to provide salvation and maintain the honor of His name, even when working through weakness.

## What Are the Questions?

I Samuel 17:1-58

### LAUNCH

How is it possible for a weakness in your life to be an opportunity instead of merely being a liability?

### EXPLORE

Read I Samuel 17:1-11

1. How would you describe the setting of this narrative in your own words based on verses 1-3?
2. What impression do verses 4-10 give of Goliath?
3. How do Saul and the people respond to Goliath's challenge in verse 11?

Read I Samuel 17:12-30

4. How does David become engaged with the standoff between the Israelites and Philistines?
5. What does verse 26 say about David's motivation to do something about Goliath's taunts?

Read I Samuel 17:31-40

6. What action does David take in verses 31-32 in light of Goliath's challenge?
7. How does Saul respond to David's offer?

8. How does David make a case for his ability to defeat Goliath?
9. What does verse 37 say about the source of David's confidence that he'll be able to defeat Goliath?

Read I Samuel 17:41-58

10. How does Goliath react to David in verses 41-44?
11. What does David's response to Goliath in verses 45-47 say about the source of his confidence?
12. What is ironic in verses 48-51 about the way David kills Goliath?
13. How does this irony enhance God's glory?

### APPLY

14. What are some of the passions in your life that compete with a passion for the honor of the living God, and how do you need to trust Him for an overriding passion for His name?
15. In what way does this study deepen your appreciation for Jesus as the true champion?
16. What do David's statements in I Samuel 17:26, 36, and 45-47 say about the specific kind of weak person God works through to display his glory?
17. Read Isaiah 59:9-20. How does God's work on our behalf through Jesus Christ compare with and eclipse His work through David in I Samuel 17?

What Are the Answers?

1. The Philistines and Israelites faced off for battle.
2. He's an ominous, fear-inducing warrior.
3. They're really scared.
4. While taking provisions to his older brothers who are fighting in the army, David hears Goliath's taunts.
5. He doesn't think it's right for Goliath to taunt the armies of the living God.
6. He offers to fight him.
7. He tells him he can't do it because he's a youth while Goliath is a professional warrior.
8. He notes God's past faithfulness to him and expresses confidence that God will also be faithful to him as he fights Goliath.
9. Goliath is taunting the armies of the living God, and David is confident that God won't stand for that.
10. He reacts to him with contempt and tells David he'll feed him to the birds and beasts.
11. He's confident of victory because he's defending the honor of God's name, because he knows this will result in the whole earth knowing of God's glory, and because the LORD is fighting the battle.
12. An untrained youth kills a professional warrior without the benefit of conventional weapons and finishes him off using his own sword.
13. It proves David's point that the battle belongs to the LORD and that He doesn't need human strength to accomplish His purposes.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
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16. God works through weak people who are passionate about the honor of His name.
17. Just as God raised up David as a champion for His people when there was no one else to help, He has raised up Jesus as our champion when there is no one else to help. But the salvation He accomplished through Christ was much more profound and far-reaching, and Jesus is a far more glorious champion than David.

Memorize

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with 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 defied."

I Samuel 17:45