



DAVID • Walking by Faith

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

I Samuel 17:20-50

Background

The Philistines had gathered for a war against the Israelites. Standing nine feet tall was the Philistine's champion warrior, Goliath. The idea was representational warfare, and the arrangement was simple: if any man could defeat Goliath, the Philistines would serve the Israelites. But, if Goliath won, the Israelites would have to serve the Philistines. The Israelites, however, were not walking by faith in God's power but by sight, and by sight, no one in their right mind would go up against this nine-foot mutant. No one had for forty days. Every day for forty days Goliath issued a challenge that went unanswered. Meanwhile, too young to be a soldier, David was at home tending the sheep until his father sent him to the frontlines with food for his brothers.

David's Arrival

Upon arriving, David hears Goliath's taunts of God and Israel. He is somewhat dumbfounded that no one has had the faith or courage to meet the challenge and shut this Philistine up. This gives us a snapshot of David's passion and faith. Nowhere does it say that God told him to fight Goliath, but from what David knew of God's character, combined with his zeal for God, the course of action to David seemed obvious – no one talks this way about God without having his mouth wiped from his face.

Faith and Zeal Breed Jealousy

David's zeal is instantly met with ridicule by his brothers. This dynamic of walking by faith should not be missed. When we step forward in faith and courage, our actions just naturally point to the lack of faith and courage of others and scream "Sissy pants!" The reflexive response is ridicule in an attempt to douse the bright light of conviction. It is such ridicule that tests whether we are pleasers of God or men.

How Faith Grows

God had already prepared David for this fight with Goliath. David remembers his previous battles with a lion and bear – each grew his faith and confidence in God, as well as prepared him to meet the current challenge of a nine-foot sea-cow named Goliath. The faith steps of today are training for the greater steps God will require tomorrow. As we trust God in little things, He shows Himself faithful, and we take that experience and knowledge into the next challenge, which will contain larger obstacles and require greater steps of faith, and so on, and so on, and so on. Faith grows like a muscle: as we exercise it, it gets bigger.

What's the Big Idea?

Character Series: The main intent of these character studies is to help your group become more familiar with the entire Bible and to see how the Old Testament connects to the New, telling one complete story of redemption which reaches its climax in Christ.

This Study: David's battle with Goliath provides a lens through which we can see the mechanics of faith – the story illustrates that "We live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

What's the Problem?

We live in a fallen world where the exercise and expansion of God's kingdom will always be met with conflict and opposition. Our sinful reactions to such opposition are: to shrink back in unbelief, looking at the struggle by sight and not faith; and cowardice, running from conflict rather than facing it.



Conversely, a lack of exercise can cause a muscle to atrophy. Faith is always in need of exercise – a battle to fight or a fight to pick. As an ongoing dynamic, there should always be challenges in our life that taunt and stretch our faith like Goliath did to David's. It is interesting to note that later in David's life, when he wrongly chose to stay home from war, he winds up in sin with Bathsheba.

God Wins the Battle

While God could have provided David with size 7 armor instead of 15, he did not. He didn't want David to forget the most essential truth necessary to winning the battle: that all battles that challenge our faith are essentially spiritual battles, and spiritual battles can only be won by trusting in God's power.

For David to have shifted his confidence to his armor, rather than the Lord, would have been a fatal error – fatal not being a metaphor. In our walk of faith, our greatest strengths can become our greatest liabilities if they cause us to shift the focus of our reliance, confidence and faith. Later in his life, David will take a census of his army (assessing his military strength), something forbidden by the Lord, because of such a shift in confidence.

The Importance of Faith

The Book of Hebrews tells us that without, faith it is impossible to please God. Why? Because the life God has designed for us to live cannot be executed apart from His power, direction, protection and provision. All of these are accessed by faith. Furthermore, God is not glorified in anything not done for Him and through Him. As we walk by faith, He rightly receives the praise and glory in all things. Scripture declares that David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). We are not told all of what was entailed in this title, but his child-like faith in the power of God and his courage to act on it with uncommon zeal, were certainly among the nominating criteria.

David as a type of Christ

In each of these Old testament studies, we want to take note of biblical typology: that is the way in which the Old Testament stories and characters prefigure and point to Christ. The Bible is comprised of many chapters and many acts but tells one story of redemption; the climax of the drama is Jesus Christ.

The most obvious way the life of David foreshadows Christ is in his role as king. David is the ideal, the prototype, of what it meant to be Israel's king. As such, he points forward and foreshadows the king, kingdom and kingliness of Jesus Christ. In as much as David was the ideal, he is still but a phantom of the reality of King Jesus.

Old Testament stories and characters can foreshadow Christ in multiple ways. In the story of David and Goliath, David fights as the representative of his people. He fights for them – in their place – and wins the victory for them. That is surely what Jesus has done for us on the cross. While David is a model to us of faith and courage, in his representative role in this battle, he is a model or replica of Jesus alone.

What's Our Response?

You want the group to understand what it means to walk by faith and not by sight.

You want them to embrace opportunities to trust God.

You want them to see the sufficiency of Christ to equip them for any battle.

You also want them to see Christ doing for us what David did for Israel: offering himself in our place, fighting the battle for us and giving us the victory.

Why do you want them to see this? Because this is what inspires us to courageously step out in faith, courageously risk ourselves and courageously follow Christ – not because David did it, but because Jesus did it for us!

What Are the Questions?

I Samuel 17:20-50

LAUNCH

If you were 90% sure that you heard God tell you to sell everything you had, move to Calcutta and work with the poor, would you do it? What assurances would you need before stepping out in faith?

EXPLORE

Read I Samuel 17:20-50.

1. Describe the situation.
2. Nowhere is it recorded that God told David to fight Goliath. What do you think made David do it?
3. God declared David a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22). What, from this story and other accounts of David, would shed light on what it means to be a man or woman “after God’s own heart?”
4. In verses 28-31, David’s brothers ridicule him. Zeal for God often arouses jealousy in others. Can you remember a time when you were ridiculed for your commitment to Christ?
5. What had God done in David’s past to prepare him for this current battle (vv. 34-36)?
6. How has God trained you and built your faith so you can trust Him in your current battles? What are some of your faith trophies?
7. What can we learn about walking by faith from David’s refusal to wear Saul’s armor (vs.38-40)?
8. What impresses you about David’s conversation with Goliath?
9. This is a representative battle: David is fighting on behalf of Israel. In what way is this a picture of Christ?
10. How else would you say David foreshadows Christ?
11. In Hebrews 11:6, it says that without faith it is impossible to please God. Why is faith so important to God?
12. Faith is restless and always looking for its next battle. What happens to you spiritually when you are not actively engaged in a faith battle?
13. In which of the following situations would it be easiest for you to walk by faith? Which would be hardest?
 You are failing in your major. Would you still believe that God has a plan for your life?
 You realize your boyfriend/girlfriend is hindering your spiritual life. Would you be willing to break off the relationship and trust God for your future?
 You feel God has called you to do something that your friends and family might not approve of.
 You feel God is calling you to speak to a friend about a sensitive issue in their life and confronting them could put your relationship in jeopardy.
14. How would you describe “walking by faith” to someone?

APPLY

15. What situation in your life is demanding you to walk by faith and not sight?
16. What armor (fleshly/human tactics) are you tempted to trust in to meet this challenge?
17. What has Christ done in your past that gives you confidence to trust Him now?
18. What is the greatest worry or fear that could cause you to shrink back in unbelief and run from the challenge?

What Are the Answers?

1. Let people share their summaries.
2. David's knowledge of who God is and a passion and zeal to defend God's honor. This is speculative; there isn't one correct answer.
3. Again, there are a lot of possible answers, including faithfulness, loyalty, zeal and passion.
4. Allow the group to discuss.
5. The battle with the lion and the bear had prepared him.
6. Allow the group to discuss.
7. God wants our faith to be in His strength to win the battle. To keep us reliant, God often keeps us vulnerable, humble and aware of our weaknesses.
8. His unwavering confidence in the Lord. Other answers are possible.
9. See "What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?" under "David as a Type of Christ."
10. See "What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?" under "David as a Type of Christ."
11. Because the life God designed us to live cannot be executed apart from His power, direction, protection, and provision. All of these are accessed by faith.
12. When we are not engaged in a faith battle, like a muscle, our faith can stagnate and atrophy.
13. Allow group to share responses.
14. Being obedient to the leading of God's Spirit. Trusting in God for all we need to obey His leading.
15. Discuss. Share your struggles.
16. You want the group to identify the ways they are most likely to rely on themselves or some other way to cope rather than coming in reliance to Christ.
17. Allow the group to discuss.
18. You want to discuss the implications of NOT walking by faith and expose those worries or fears most likely to incline toward shrinking back or running away.

Memorize

The group has now memorized the first 17 books of the Old Testament. These books include the five books of Moses as well as 12 books of history. The next section in the Old Testament is the Poetic books. There are five of them:

[Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs](#)

By next week, the group should be able to say all 22 books in order.