SESSION 9

Victory

1 SAMUEL 17:32-47

DAVID FOUGHT AGAINST GOLIATH WITH GOD'S POWER AND FOR GOD'S HONOR.



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Ernest Hemingway wrote, "Courage is grace under pressure."[1] Life is filled with challenges that test our faith and strain our courage. Cultural pressure pushes us to compromise our convictions. We long to stand firm in God's power and defend His honor, yet the pressure can feel overwhelming. Standing for God is not easy, but when we contend for God's honor with truth, grace, and love, His power is revealed through victory and even the miraculous.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO WE HAVE IN OUR DAILY LIVES TO BRING HONOR TO GOD'S NAME?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Philistine army and Saul's army of Israelites had gathered for battle, each on an opposing hill with a ravine between them. Out of the Philistine camp stepped their champion warrior. Goliath stood 9 feet, 9 inches tall. His military clothing weighed 125 pounds. Goliath's weapons were imposing. Everything about him was imposing. His challenges struck fear in the Israelite soldiers. Goliath challenged Israel to send one man to fight him with a "winner take all" finale. Saul and all the soldiers in Israel lost their courage and were terrified at Goliath's challenge.

Prior to Israel going into battle, Samuel had been instructed by the Lord to anoint a new king from the house of Jesse (1 Sam. 16:1). Jesse's youngest son, David, had been anointed king. David's older brothers had been enlisted into Saul's army. Even though Samuel anointed David as Israel's next king, David resumed his duties as a shepherd. From the fields, Jesse called David to take supplies to the field commanders and check on his brothers.

When David arrived in the Valley of Elah, he checked on his brothers. As he spoke with them, Goliath came out once again to challenge Israel. When David heard Goliath's defiance, he was incensed. This uncircumcised Philistine had defied the armies of the living God. David spoke out against the Philistine and challenged Israel to defend the name of their Lord. Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard David's plea. He quickly scorned David as arrogant and insignificant.

David might have been young and inexperienced in battle, but he had fought lions and bears to protect his sheep. More than this, David feared the Lord. He lived to honor the Lord's name. News of David's confident words reached the tent of King Saul. David would either cower under the pressure of his words, or he would back his words with conviction and action, knowing God would bring the victory.

1. Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

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1 Samuel 17:32-47

32 David said to Saul, "Don't let anyone **be discouraged** [A] by him; your servant will go and fight **this Philistine**!" [B] **33** But Saul replied, "You can't go fight this Philistine. You're just a youth, and he's been a warrior since he was young." **34** David answered Saul, "Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, **35** I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. **36** Your servant has **killed lions and bears**; [C] this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." **37** Then David said, "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." Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." **38** Then Saul had **his own military clothes** [D] put on David. He put a bronze helmet on David's head and had him put on armor. **39** David strapped his sword on over the military clothes and tried to walk, but he was not used to them. "I can't walk in these," David said to Saul, "I'm not used to them." So David took them off. **40** Instead, he took his **staff** [E] in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd's bag. Then, with **his sling** [F] in his hand, he approached the Philistine. **41** The Philistine came closer and closer to David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. **42** When the Philistine looked and saw David, he **despised** [G] him because he was just a youth, healthy and handsome. **43** He said to David, "Am I a dog that you come against me with sticks?" Then he cursed David by his gods. **44** "Come here," the Philistine called to David, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts!" **45** David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in **the name of the LORD of Armies**, [H] the God of the ranks of Israel—you have defied him. **46** Today, the LORD will hand you over to me. Today, I'll strike you down, remove your head, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that **Israel has a God**, [I] **47** and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD's. He will hand you over to us."

Key Words

A. The Israelites, including Saul, were so afraid of Goliath that they had lost heart. David, however, was not afraid to face the giant.

B. Goliath was no ordinary Philistine. He measured nearly ten feet tall and his armor alone weighed 125 pounds (1 Sam. 17:3-7).

C. God had delivered David from wild animals on multiple occasions. The young man saw no reason why God would not deliver a pagan who cursed His name into David's hands.

D. "Armor" (ESV); "tunic" (NIV). Saul tried to outfit David with his own weapons.

E. A common tool for shepherds. It was used as a walking stick and, when necessary, a weapon.

F. This weapon would have two long straps with a pocket in the middle to hold a stone. After twirling the cords, David would have released one strap to send the stone flying.

G. This Hebrew term (*baza*) implies ridicule or mocking. Goliath was offended that Israel had sent a boy with a sling to fight him.

H. David's greatest weapon was his faith and his commitment to defend God's holy name.

I. David knew the victory would belong to God and wanted Him to receive all the glory.

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EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. David's Faith

(1 Sam. 17:32-37)

God's people can be confident that He is greater than their enemies.

- **When have you faced a difficult situation that challenged your faith?**
- **How does God's past faithfulness prepare you for today's battles?**

2. David's Weapons

(1 Sam. 17:38-40)

Believers need to know that the battle to defend God's honor cannot be fought by worldly methods.

- **What happens when we look at life only from a worldly point of view?**
- **What "weapons" do believers have today as they fight for God's honor?**

3. God's Victory

(1 Sam. 17:41-47)

Be zealous for God's honor and trust His strategy so that He will get the glory.

- **What does it mean to say, "the battle is the LORD's"?**
- **How does pursuing God's honor shape how you live your life daily?**

Apply the Text

- **When have your group members needed to know that God would fight for them?**
- **What are some specific ways your group could come alongside others who are fighting battles in their relationships, personal lives, or walk with God?**

KEY DOCTRINE:
God the Father

God is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. (See 2 Chronicles 20:6; Jeremiah 32:17.)

BIBLE SKILL:
Research a recurring theme in Scripture.

Essential to understanding the history of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament is an understanding of the Old Testament concept of war. Read the article about "Holy War" in a Bible dictionary. How does what you learn about holy wars compare to modern-day warfare?

***Explore the Bible* Prayer Guide**

Scan here for a weekly prayer guide based on this quarter's Bible passages.

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TALK IT OUT

Focus on 1 Samuel 17:37, noting the source of David's confidence.

When David offered to face Goliath, Saul dismissed him because of his youth and lack of experience. David countered by explaining how God had helped him defeat both lions and bears. Trusting in God and eager to uphold His honor, David was confident the Lord would also give him victory over Goliath.

In what ways do people tend to rely on themselves instead of trusting God? What are some everyday situations where you struggle to trust God fully?

Just as David trusted that the same God who delivered him from lions and bears would deliver him from Goliath, we can face challenges with unwavering faith, knowing God is greater than any obstacle. And like David, this confidence is not merely for personal victory but for God's honor. This passage calls for a shift in perspective—from relying on human ability to trusting in God's power. It encourages us to act boldly for His honor, confident that the battle ultimately belongs to Him.

What are some ways you can respond to difficult situations that reflect a desire to honor God?

Memorize 1 Samuel 17:37, considering ways God has demonstrated His faithfulness to you.

Prayer Requests / Notes

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DAILY EXPLORATION



Day 1: 1 Samuel 17:32-37

Note the basis for David's confidence in the Lord.

Fear held the entire army of Israel in a tight grip. Saul promised any soldier who defeated Goliath wealth, marriage to one of his daughters, and a tax-free life for the soldier's family. Even with all the incentives, no one stepped up. What would a wife and riches provide if you were not there to enjoy them? When David heard that Israel's enemy stood in opposition against the armies of God, he could not believe no one dared defend God's honor.

David heralded God's honor as the living God (1 Sam. 17:26). Whatever he did, whether as a shepherd defending his flock from lions and bears, or facing an uncircumcised Philistine giant, David fought for God's honor. He would not back down. He confidently announced that he would go and fight the Philistine.

David's courage was founded in faith. He believed the Lord would rescue him from this Philistine in the same way He had previously rescued him from the "paw of the lion" and the "paw of the bear." David was focusing on God's faithfulness in the past to strengthen his faith for this future battle. In the face of such confident conviction, what more could Saul say? Saul gave the command to "go."

When have you faced a difficult situation that challenged your faith?

How does God's past faithfulness prepare you for today's battles?



Day 2: 1 Samuel 17:38-39

Consider the reason David refused to wear Saul's clothing.

Unwilling to fight but eager to have someone face Israel's persistent enemy, Saul clothed David with his "own military clothes." Saul was a tall man. "He stood a head taller than anyone else" (9:2). No doubt, his tunic and outer military armor swallowed David. David went through with the charade and tried to walk, but "he was not used to them."

David explained that he could not wear the clothing because he was not used to it. In reality, David did not put his trust in human devices but in the Lord of hosts. Saul looked at the situation from a human perspective, but David looked at it through the lens of faith. Later, David wrote, "Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride in the name of the LORD our God" (Ps. 20:7).

In a foreshadowing of David's future approach to kingship, he aligned himself with the great shepherd-leaders of Israel's past—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—choosing to walk in their ways. David lived by faith and acted in faith. He declined to rely on human strength or earthly protections. Instead, David trusted in God alone. That trust freed him to enter the battle unhindered—neither weighed down by self-confidence nor propped up by false security.

What happens when you attempt to walk through the difficulties of life depending on human wisdom or someone else's "armor"?

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Day 3: 1 Samuel 17:40

Note how David's time as a shepherd prepared him for this battle with Goliath.

David left Saul's presence with his shepherd's staff in hand. He walked down to the wadi and chose "five smooth stones." David's approach mirrored that of his time with his sheep (1 Sam. 17:37). To fight off wild animals as a shepherd, David used a staff for close confrontations and slingstones to ward off coming prey. Both items David took into battle were not man-made devices but fashioned by God.

With the sling, stones, and staff in hand, David approached the Philistine. Spiritual battles can never be fought with worldly devices. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of darkness (Eph. 6:12). God provides spiritual weapons because spiritual battles are won through spiritual people who evaluate everything, not from a worldly perspective, but with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:15-16). David considered this battle to be one fought for God's honor and in God's name (1 Sam. 17:45). Throughout David's life, he knew the value of the Lord's name and lived to worship the Lord in all His majesty (Pss. 8:1; 29:2; 34:3; 111:9).

What spiritual weapons do you have today as you fight for God's honor?

Day 4: 1 Samuel 17:41-44

Consider how Goliath's overconfidence blinded him to what was about to happen.

The battle took a quick turn. For days on end, the two sides had stared at each other. Then out of the shadows stepped forth a young man without military armor or even a sword.

When Goliath finally spotted David, he could not believe his eyes. Coming toward him was a young man, "healthy and handsome," not a seasoned warrior. Goliath looked at David's staff. He ridiculed David and mocked his stick as something he would use to shoo away a dog. Goliath took David's presence as an insult. In his mind, victory over David would do little to enhance his reputation as a champion. So, Goliath "despised him."

For a man of Goliath's stature and experience, it made no sense for him to fight this young boy. But Goliath had done nothing for weeks except challenge Israel to present a fighter. With no one from Israel's camp to fight, Goliath decided he would not let this opportunity pass. He "cursed David by his gods" and predicted the outcome (vv. 43-44). Goliath talked a big game, but obviously, he did not know who he was up against.

When have you underestimated someone God was using because they didn't fit your expectations of what strength or leadership should look like?

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Day 5: 1 Samuel 17:45-47

Pay attention to David's motivation for defeating Goliath.

God's honor had been attacked, and David would not allow the Lord's name to be belittled. How easy it is for people to dishonor the name of the Lord and God's people not flinch.

David acknowledged that Goliath's abilities to do battle were significant. However, David's confidence did not rest in his abilities but "in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel." David referenced this description as a way to honor the Lord's name, but also to remind Israel of God's faithfulness to deliver them in the past.

David would not defeat the Philistine for the glory of Israel. This event would serve as a major statement of God's purpose for this world—that "all the world will know that Israel has a God." David wanted the world to hear from this battle that the Lord saves, "for the battle is the LORD's."

Even when life feels uncertain and circumstances test your faith, there is a God who is able to bring victory in the midst of certain defeat. The Lord fights for you. Trust His strategy and know He will not abandon you. The Lord's presence surrounds all who trust in Him. Therefore, you do not have to fight life's battles alone. When you know the Lord of Armies, you live to honor Him knowing He cares for you

What does it mean to say, "the battle is the LORD's"?

How does pursuing God's honor shape how you live your life daily?

APPLY THE TEXT

Why is God's honor important in your witness to the world? What does it mean specifically to defend God's honor? What does that look like in your group, church, and community?

JOURNAL

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