SESSION 9

Victory

David fought against Goliath with God's power and for God's honor.

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, [C] and he's been a **warrior** [D] 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**; [E] 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** [F] 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**, [G] 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 [H] 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** [I] 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** [J] 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**, [K] 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**, [L] 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."

Exploring Key Words

A The Israelites, including Saul, were so afraid of Goliath 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 Saul may have been referencing David's age or questioning his experience as a fighter. Either way, he did not believe David could win.

D In contrast, Goliath had been a soldier for years. This, along with his size, added to the intimidation the Israelites felt.

E 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 (v. 37).

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

G David was still a youth, while Saul stood a head above every man in Israel (1 Sam. 10:23). It's no wonder David's movements were encumbered by the king's armor.

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

I 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.

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

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

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

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NOTES

David's Faith (1 Sam. 17:32-37)

- When David volunteered to fight Goliath, Saul initially rejected his offer on the basis of David's inexperience. David responded by recounting how, with God's help, he had fought and defeated lions and bears.
- Eager to defend God's honor, David was confident the Lord would empower him to defeat Goliath.

David's Weapons (1 Sam. 17:38-40)

- Saul tried to dress David in his own armor, but David refused. He was not comfortable and could not walk with all that equipment.
- With nothing more than a shepherd's staff, his sling, and five stones taken from the wadi, David approached Goliath.

God's Victory (1 Sam. 17:41-47)

- Goliath ridiculed David's physical appearance and his choice of weapons. He cursed David and threatened to feed his body to the birds and to wild animals.
- David acknowledged Goliath's superior strength and weapons, but he also declared his confidence that God would fight for him. He claimed that his victory over the Philistine giant would testify to God's presence and power among His people.
- Later in the chapter, David defeated Goliath, cutting off Goliath's head with the giant's own sword. His boldness and faith inspired Israel to a massive victory over the Philistines and led to Saul bringing him into the royal court.

Summary Statements

David fought against Goliath with God's power and for God's honor.

- God's people can be confident that He is greater than their enemies.
- Believers need to know that the battle to defend God's honor cannot be fought by worldly methods.
- Be zealous for God's honor and trust His strategy so that He will get the glory.

Memory Verse

1 Samuel 17:37a

Key Doctrine

God the Father

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

For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at **goExploreTheBible.com.**

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ENGAGE

Bonus: How would you define "courage" in life? Who fits that description best in your mind?

- 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 we were never meant to rely on our own strength. 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? (***PSG, p. 82***)

EXPLORE

DAVID'S FAITH (1 SAM. 17:32-37)

Bonus: When have you been paralyzed by fear or doubt? How did you break free?

- A Philistine giant named Goliath had paralyzed King Saul and the Israelites with fear. For forty days, he insulted God and God's people; and, to this point, no one from Israel had dared to step out and fight him. Even Saul's offer of rewards were not enough to motivate soldiers to risk their lives against a man nearly ten feet tall.
- David, a shepherd boy who had been anointed king, changed all that. When he heard Goliath's blasphemous taunts, he was ready to take a stand for God's honor. He had seen God protect him from bears and lions in the field, and he believed God would do the same in a battle against a pagan who mocked His name.
- David's courage and confidence did not impress King Saul, who pointed out David's youth and inexperience. On the outside, no one would have argued Saul's point. But David was focused on God's faithfulness in the past to strengthen his faith for this battle.

When have you faced a difficult situation that challenged your faith? How does God's past faithfulness prepare you for today's battles? (***PSG, p. 85***)

DAVID'S WEAPONS (1 SAM. 17:38-40)

Bonus: What makes up your daily routine? Why are those important to you?

- Eventually, Saul relented and gave David the go-ahead to fight Goliath. But first, he wanted to dress David in his own military clothes. David humored the king, but he explained that he was not comfortable wearing the armor and weapons.
- For this battle, David relied on what he knew: his staff, his sling, some stones, and an unwavering confidence in God. These are all he needed to fight bears and lions, so he knew they were enough to defeat Goliath.
- David refused to rely on human strength or earthly protections. Instead, he trusted God alone. That trust freed him to enter the battle unhindered.

What "weapons" do believers have today as they fight for God's honor? (***PSG, p. 87***)

GOD'S VICTORY (1 SAM. 17:41-47)

Bonus: In what areas can you trust God for a victory today?

- Goliath ridiculed David and mocked his "stick" as something he would use to shoo away a dog. The giant was offended that Israel had sent a boy to fight him, but he was more than ready to crush whatever opponent he faced.
- However, Goliath did not realize that he was outnumbered. While he cursed David by his gods, David defended the name of the only God who really mattered. He told Goliath what he had told Saul: God would be the One fighting the battle and delivering the Philistine into his hands.
- David did defeat Goliath. His victory from God inspired the rest of Israel's army to attack the Philistines and experience an incredible triumph.

How does pursuing God's honor shape how you live your life daily? (***PSG, p. 89***)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss times when adults needed God to fight a battle 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? (***PSG, p. 90***)

Encourage adults to reflect on their 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? (***PSG, p. 90***)

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

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

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BONUS IDEAS

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 89)

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?***

Encourage adults to list famous wars that have been fought across history. List their responses on the board. Ask: ***How many of these would you define as a "holy war"? Why?*** Discuss responses.

Direct adults to form teams of two or three people. Give each team a Bible dictionary and instruct them to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 89 of the PSG. After a few minutes, refer to the question at the end of the activity. Allow a few volunteers to share what their team learned about holy wars and how that compares to contemporary warfare.

OBJECT LESSON: STICKS AND STONES

Gather a large stick from a tree, along with a palm-sized rock. As you discuss the weapons that David chose for battling Goliath, show the stick and the stone to the group.

Point out that these "weapons" were not man-made. Say: *They were taken from God's creation.* Note that humans have the ability to devise tools and equipment that are helpful in many ways, but David was confident in what God had already given him. Remind adults that David never had armor when he fought bears and lions in the field. Say: *He just had his staff, his sling, and some stones. More important, He had God's power and protection over his life, and that's the "weapon" he trusted more than anything else.*

Direct a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 10:4. Emphasize that, even today, our weapons are not fleshly, but from God. Challenge adults to use what God provides to honor His name.

DIG DEEPER

CHOOSING YOUR ARMOR

I once met a strong Christian brother who served as a prison guard. This man had memorized all the pieces of the God's armor described in Ephesians 6:10-20. Every morning, as he got dressed, he would recite the verses and pray for God's protection at work.

I'm not here to say that you must memorize those verses and recite them daily, but I do believe David's preparation for fighting Goliath helps us see the wisdom of using the tools God has provided. David was offered the best armor and weapons for this battle. To be given the king's own armor and sword would have been an honor and a blessing to most soldiers in David's situation. All the pieces would have been valuable and likely kept in pristine condition.

However, David rejected these tools. Many scholars have suggested that David was too small to wear the massive armor of Saul. That may be true, but I also believe David was encumbered more by their unfamiliarity than by their size.

David did not want to go into battle with tools he did not trust. He had never worn armor fighting bears and wolves, so he stuck with what he knew: a staff, a sling, some stones, and an unwavering faith in God!

David made it clear that his armor—his protection—did not come from tools made by human hands. God had delivered him from wild animals, and God would provide the victory (1 Sam. 17:37). His story didn't change once he finally saw Goliath up close: "Today, the LORD will hand you over to me" (17:46).

David was familiar with his staff, his sling, the stones, and God's presence. These "weapons" gave him all the confidence he needed for battle.

Similarly, our protection comes not from our skill, our muscles, or our resources. It comes from God. Daily, we engage in a spiritual battle, and we need to be familiar with the tools He has provided if we're going to overcome the temptations we face. Look to Him and His Word, and you will find victory!

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