

FPFWC Christian Development



Profiles in Faith

December 2023

Winter Quarter

December 9, 2023

Lesson #1 – The Faith of David

SCRIPTURE TEXT –1 Samuel 17:31-37, 45, 48-50

ICE BREAKER –

1. In the story of David and Goliath, what “weapons” were the most powerful?
2. How do you balance confidence in yourself and in the Lord so that it doesn’t become arrogance or yield dependence on yourself?
3. In what concrete way can you confront a “giant” problem or trouble with faith?

Key Verse: “David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.—1 Samuel 17:37a

LESSON BACKGROUND

The events of today’s text occur sometime before 1010 BC, the year that Israel’s kingship transitioned from Saul to David. Prior to the events of this lesson’s text, the prophet Samuel had anointed David to be Saul’s successor as king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1–13). Having been rejected by the Lord, Saul’s days as king were numbered (see 1 Samuel 15). Even so, Saul looked on David with favor and employed him in personal service (16:14–23)—at least for a time.

David entered the army encampment in 1 Samuel 17 as part of an episode of an Israelite war with the Philistines. David was a late arrival due to the fact that he had been left to tend sheep while his older brothers went off to war (1 Samuel 17:13–14). After several weeks, the war degenerated into something of a stalemate. But the Israelite army seemed ready to break due to low morale (17:11, 24). The reason was the relentless taunts of a Philistine named Goliath, who stood about 9’9” tall (17:4–10). As our text begins, David had heard the taunt (17:23) as well as the promise of reward for defeating Goliath (17:25–27). David had also just borne the criticism of his oldest brother for an apparent neglect of duty to attend to sheep left in David’s care (17:28).

LESSON COMMENTARY

17:31–33. The word that someone in Israel’s camp had challenged Goliath reached Saul’s ears, so he sent for David. Saul was not impressed with David’s youth and lack of military training, thinking the youthful David was no match for Goliath who had been trained in the art of combat since he was a **youth**.

17:34–37. David’s response to Saul was admirable. David, the teenaged shepherd, had had some major private victories in his life. In David’s day fierce animals such as lions and bears roamed the countryside. But when a lion attacked David’s flock and took a lamb, David pursued it. Most people would just take a loss instead of going after a lion,

but not David. He attacked the lion and rescued the sheep from its mouth. If the lion decided to fight back, David would grab it by its **beard** (its mane, v. 35) and kill it. Unlike Saul, who was introduced as one who was reluctant to expend the effort to find his father's donkeys (cf. 1Sm 9:5), David was portrayed as ferociously protective, steadfast, and courageous in caring for his father's sheep—a detail included to indicate David's suitability for being Israel's "shepherd" rather than Saul. David considered the Philistine as posing a similar threat as the predatory beasts he encountered. The Lord had delivered David from the lion and the bear, and He would deliver David from Goliath.

17:43–47. In antiquity warriors talked to each other before they fought, lacing their speeches with curses and expletives. Goliath threatened to feed David to the vultures and wild **beasts** (v. 44). But David's response was different. He battled in God's name. David's goal was the glory of God, **that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel** (v. 46).

David's miraculous victory over Goliath would point the nations to God and serve an evangelistic purpose. David's purpose was also to help God's people see that human weaponry alone was not the means of deliverance, because **the battle is the LORD's** (v. 47). Goliath was not fighting against David; he was defying God. Since the battle belonged to the Lord, He would **give** Goliath into David's **hands**.

17:48–54. Suddenly, the talking stopped. **David ran quickly toward the battle line** (v. 48) in contrast to Saul and the others running away (cf. v. 24). **David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead** (v. 49). Goliath was defeated in a matter of a few seconds.

LESSON NUGGET – Saul was losing strength, but David was growing in power; and Saul's diminishment would continue until Saul's tragic death. Saul stood head and shoulders above everybody else, but he was not big enough to meet Goliath. David was a man of faith, and God gave him spiritual stature. Great faith makes great men and women. David's only desire was to glorify the God of Israel (vv. 45-47).

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary