

DAVID

LIFE OF A GIANT-KILLER

PART 3: HOW TO GET AHEAD

INTRODUCTION – THE ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT

Numbers 11:29; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:1-21; Philippians 1:9-10; 1 John 2:20, 27

THE STORY – DAVID & GOLIATH

1 Samuel 17

- Longest chapter in 1 Samuel with an extremely high level of detail for an ancient writing. The writers of Scripture considered this story especially significant.
- The Philistines and Israelites were at a standoff with both sides wanting victory without excessive bloodshed. The challenge of Goliath may have been a stalling tactic while the Philistines waited for more troops to arrive. If so, their plan was working.
- Goliath was 6 cubits – about 9.5 feet – tall according to the Hebrew text (and 4 cubits – or about 6.5 feet – tall in the LXX).
- Goliath self-identifies as a Philistine, but calls his opponents “servants of Saul” rather than Israelites, suggesting that they are just slaves of a dictator rather than a real nation. By contrast, David later refers to Israel as the “armies of the living God”.
- David is back tending his family’s sheep again – an interesting view to the quality of his character. Rather than boast that the king’s personal servant and royal musician is not above such menial tasks, David still makes time to do his chores.
- David goes to the battlefield on a family errand, bringing his brothers supplies. He responsibly finds someone to watch over the sheep while he is away. Again, character is seen in the little, other-centred, things.
- While at the battlefield David overhears Goliath’s challenge (ongoing for 40 days, twice a day). David inquires as to the details of the reward for the Israelite who vanquishes Goliath and also speaks out against Goliath as “uncircumcised” – that is, outside of God’s covenant blessing – coming against God’s armies. Thus David’s first speech reveals both sides of his nature: a) a deep love for God and his people; and b) a WIIFM (“What’s-in-it-for-me?”) approach to specific situations.
- Eliab, the oldest brother who may have still been bitter that he was overlooked by Samuel, snaps at David, accusing him of being irresponsible and leaving the sheep behind just to come watch the battle. So we see that David’s own brothers didn’t believe in his calling or character. David does not defend himself to Eliab or return insult for insult (sound familiar?). Instead he stays focussed on what lies ahead.
- Saul hears of David’s conversation and calls for him. David immediately offers to fight for Israel and gives evidence that he can do it (e.g., his stunning successes fighting wild animals to defend his sheep).
- Based on David’s proven track record (not blind faith), Saul sends David into battle, wishing that the LORD would be with him. (Ironic since the LORD is with David already, unlike Saul.)
- David rejects Saul’s offer of armour. Saul is seen putting his faith in the tangible, just like the Philistines. Some ancients believed that to wear the armour of a man was to share his essence and power. If David won, Saul might claim a vicarious victory for himself. David denies Saul the opportunity. Ultimately, David rejects the armour because it is not tested, he is not used to it, it is foreign to him. David goes with what he knows. (Note the pronouns... David chooses to go with HIS staff and HIS sling.)
- David tells Goliath in advance that the LORD will bring the victory, even though he will do it through David. These are plain facts, no false humility on the one hand or arrogant boasting on the other. God works in partnership with is people.
- David ran toward Goliath and apparently knocked him unconscious with his sling and stone, then killed him with his Goliath’s own sword by beheading. The Philistines run away in panic while the armies of Israel pursue.

- Saul inquires as to David’s family, assumingly to make good on his promise to exempt the family of the victor from taxes and other service. He also needs to begin to get to know the family of his future son-in-law.

REFLECTIONS, INSIGHTS, & APPLICATIONS

- I. The gift of family is that we are known for who we are, not the roles we play. Family roots us in our real identity rather than in our “marketed” identity. If your own family is not healthy enough to offer you this, cling close to your spiritual family all the more.
- II. Character is forged in the little things, especially family responsibilities. Thank God for family as your primary arena for cultivating spiritual growth. Don’t run from family in order to invest time in being “spiritual”. Do your chores with love and privilege.
- III. Thinking about our own reward in any relationship or activity is not set out as wrong in Scripture. In fact, it is part of a healthy interaction with the world, live, and others.
- IV. David’s confidence in God shows in his not getting pulled into family squabbles and petty arguments. He does not need to be defensive since his life will vindicate him.
- V. Biblical faith is never blind faith. David was an unlikely hero, sure, but he did have a proven track record of violent success. Facts should not be contrary to faith. Faith is simply the next, relational, step along the road of facts.
- VI. In accomplishing the tasks God calls us to, we can avoid falling prey to the “impostor syndrome” by being completely ourselves to others, warts and all. When we give glory to God for our successes, we are freed from trying to pretend we are more competent than we are. How are you tempted to wear armour that isn’t “you”?
- VII. David ran toward his fear. He overcame his fear with active (running), reasonable (based on personal experience and historical evidence), passionate (eager to stand up for God’s cause, not personal reputation) faith. How do you deal with fear?

CONCLUSION – FIGHTING FEAR WITH... FEAR

Psalm 111:10; Matthew 10:28

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week’s message, share one thing that most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Review **1 Samuel 17**. a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) Jesus sets David before us as a role model in many ways. For instance, David served his family as a way of serving God. What family responsibilities do you need to pay more attention to? c) What family members (e.g., like Eliab) are the most challenging for you to get along with? How does David’s example guide your future interactions with them? d) David wisely refused to try to be like, look like, and fight like Saul. What ways are you tempted to try to be like or look like someone other than who God created you to be? e) David was motivated by God’s honour, Israel’s reputation, and the tangible rewards offered by Saul. What personal rewards/payoffs motivate you in your service of God and his people? Be plainly honest about it. Do you think God approves or disapproves of your motivations?
3. **BONUS QUESTION – FOR THE KEENERS...** **2 Samuel 21:19** says that another Bethlehemite, called Elhanan, killed Goliath. **1 Chronicles 20:5** says that it was Goliath’s brother, Elhanan, who was killed. What’s the deal with the “contradictions”?

SO WHAT?...

4. Time for some self-assessment. Reflecting back over **1 Samuel 17**, in what ways are you like: a) David, b) Eliab, c) Jesse, d) the soldiers of Israel, e) Saul, f) Goliath? If you know each other well enough, invite feedback and look at each other’s areas of success and need for growth. Exchange ideas for growth and pray for each other.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, July 6, 2008