



1 Samuel

Following The Shepherd King In An Age Of Personal Freedom

Life Group Discussion / Week Nine

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

In 1 Samuel 17 we study the encounter between David and Goliath. This story is possibly the most well-known story in all the Bible for both young and old. Even people who have never read the Bible are familiar with a young boy who took down the famous giant-warrior. The story is often used as somewhat of a parable for facing the “Goliaths” in our lives with courage, grit, and determination. Given this interpretation, we are encouraged to emulate David’s bravery and courage. If we merely do this, it’s possible that we’ve tragically missed the point of the story and, even worse, we steal the spotlight from God.

What we see in this chapter is a fight for God’s reputation, a passion for his glory, and a sign of the kind of savior God sends for his people.

READ

1 Samuel 17

STUDY & APPLY

1. **What motivated David to face Goliath? How was his response to the threat different from Saul’s response?**
2. David recognized that God alone is all-powerful and is faithful to fight for His people, just as He had done for him in the past while protecting his father’s sheep. In God’s economy, no experience is wasted. **Who does David credit for his past victories? How can looking to God’s past work in history and in our lives be a good practice for the challenges we face today and in the future?**
3. This chapter does allow us to focus on David in one respect and that is to share his vision of faith as he kept his eyes fixed on the honor of God. The right perspective helps us to avoid the traps of legalism and indifference to the challenges before us. Legalism causes us to feel guilty for a lack of courage, constantly feeling that we need to do more to please God and therefore increasingly trusting in what we bring to the fight. Indifference causes us to not engage at all—thinking that since God is sovereign he will work things out with or without us. **What do we learn from David’s faith that helps us to avoid both legalism and indifference to the challenges before us?**

A common application from this story is often to ask ourselves, “What Goliath’s do you face in your life and how can you be more courageous like David?” This is really the wrong focus. We are not meant to see ourselves as David in this passage. Our focus is meant to be on God who is capable to save us in the midst of our weakness, even as we are like Eliab or the rest of the Israelites timid and fearful to honor God at all cost. The key phrase in this passage might be in vs. 45 when David says, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts...”. So when we face challenges in our life (grief, sickness, loss, or fear of the future), instead of asking, “What are your Goliaths?” a much better question could be “What are your swords, spears, and javelins?” We are meant to evaluate how we put too much trust in human greatness and strength and not enough in the Lord who is capable.

This story goes to great lengths to describe how strong and experienced Goliath is and how puny and inexperienced David is. This is intentional and the key to understanding the story. We are meant to see that the strongest one is defeated, and the weakest one is triumphant. Our salvation and sanctification does not come through instruments of human greatness, but through weakness—through Christ who went to the cross to die for his people.

David would later have to prepare for another kind of battle in his life. His faith is recorded in Psalm 20:7, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.” Think of the ways you might get ready for some great challenge before you. It could be a relational conflict or a surgery or a political election. For David and his army, the temptation is to look to military might as their hope. Instead they look to the Lord and to the king he has sent them. How easy it is for us to place hope in human greatness—family, money, affirmation from others, doctors, programs, crisp doctrine, or politicians. Christians look instead to their anointed King, Jesus.

4. What tend to be some of your “chariots and horses” in your life?

Read this excerpt from *1 Samuel For Us* by Tim Chester:

The message of David and Goliath is not that we can face and overcome any challenge, but that we have One who defeats our greatest enemy—Satan and death itself. The message of 1 Samuel 17 is not that we can be like David. It’s the good news that we *have a David*. Jesus descends into the valley of death to confront and defeat our enemy and sets us free. As we stand on the hillside, afraid and ashamed, we see down in the valley our hero, Jesus, entering the battle armed only with a beam of wood strapped to his shoulders. There is Jesus, like David, appearing small compared to the might of the Roman Empire, appearing weak compared to the power of the snake. But he enters the battle bravely. He entrusts himself to God. As we look, we see defeat turn to victory as Jesus bursts from the tomb. Our enemy is crushed. Jesus is the hero, not our determination or grit or character. Jesus stands between us and our judgement in the same way that David stood between Israel and Goliath. Our future hung on his shoulders as he hung on the cross.

5. In light of the story, now is the time for us to surge forward with a shout of triumph just as the Israelites did after victory. **What is our call to action in this chapter?**

PRAY

Close your discussion praying earnestly, empathetically, and boldly for one another.