

# DAVID

## Week 3 | Rascals | 1 Samuel 17

### Deeper Dive

During this time, Israel was at war with the Philistines. The two armies were in the Valley of Elah, and both were poised on either side. The army of Israel was being lead by King Saul, and they were in a fearful, spiritually weak state. They had chosen Saul to be their first earthly King due to his strong physical appearance and supposed military leadership, however, his faith was very weak.

A common practice in ancient warfare was "single combat" in which each army would send one warrior to fight each other in a duel. This "single combat" would determine the outcome for the nations. It was a way to battle without having full-scale combat and greater loss of life.

In 1 Samuel, the Philistines sent their warrior, Goliath, to taunt the Israelites. Goliath was described as a giant at around 9'6" tall. Since the Philistines had very advanced armor and weaponry as compared to the Israelites, they sent Goliath in a full display of their armor & weaponry. This was a common tactic used to intimidate their opponents before a battle like this.

### Day 1 - Main character energy

**READ:** 1 Samuel 17:1-11

Whether you grew up in church or not, we have probably all heard the story of David and Goliath. Even culturally, this story is often used as a metaphor for how the underdog defeats the giant. It's one of those classic "feel good" stories in the Bible that we all love. The small shepherd boy has the courage to defeat a giant warrior with just a sling shot and a stone. We often use this to demonstrate that we can do anything if we are just courageous and faithful like David, even defeat our "giants". While parts of this are absolutely true, there is so much more below the surface of this classic Bible story. This week we are going to take a much deeper look at this story in 1 Samuel, as we learn more about our "Rascal", David.

Many times we relate ourselves to David in the story. It feels good to liken ourselves to this victorious underdog right?! We pridefully enjoy being the hero of our story. However, when we are studying scripture it's always important to remember that God is always the hero. In fact, He's the main character and the hero of every single Bible story. Just as He should be in our lives as well. We will always learn more if we read the Bible to learn about the Lord, and not in order to feel good about ourselves.

For this week's study, let's relate ourselves to the people of Israel, instead of David. If we glance at the story a little deeper, we can see little reflections of Christ in David. He is the anointed king but not yet realized, seen as weak by worldly standards, confronting the enemy on our behalf, and is able to triumph with salvation for his people through the power of the Lord. He defeats the enemy while we stand powerless, weak, and fearful while waiting for a savior. He steps in as savior with the power of the Lord while their earthly king is paralyzed in weakness by his lack of faith.

- Where are you trying to "be David" instead of admitting that you are more like Israel?
- Who has the "main character energy" in your story? What would it look like to make Jesus the hero & savior in your life, instead of yourself? How would that shift change the way you view your struggles, battles, and even your enemies?

## Deeper Dive

- **Matthew 14: 29-31** ~Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"
- **Proverbs 3:5-6** ~Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.
- **Psalms 118:8** ~It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans.
- **2 Corinthians 3:5** ~Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God
- **Jeremiah 17: 7-8** ~"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord. That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

Week 3: David

## Day 2 - God-confident

**READ:** 1 Samuel 17:12-30

Have you ever heard of someone becoming suddenly strong when they are hurt, fearful, or angry? Biologically when our brains sense anger, frustration, stress, pain, or fear this activates our "fight or flight" response system. This literally causes our bodies to temporarily have increased speed, awareness, strength, and even pain tolerance. God made us this way to help us in times of need. Most of us experience this reaction daily without even realizing it. Maybe crossing a street you were able to dodge a fast moving car, or you miraculously grab your kiddo just as they were falling. It can be used for good when we are able to overcome or escape a dangerous situation. However, if we instead get frozen in fear, anxiety, and stress this response can become toxic to our bodies and mental health.

When we look at David's miraculous strength and courage, how is he able to become so courageous that he's willing to go head-to-head with a man that no one in Israel will dare to fight? The answer is in verse 26, after Goliath comes out to shout curses to the Lord, David becomes angry that God is being dishonored. David's "fight or flight" system is activated by this righteous offense. Israel and King Saul are similarly offended, however, they are frozen in fear because they are looking inward at their own lacking abilities verses the strength of Goliath. David is confident that the Lord will protect him, just as He has all the times before when he had to fight lions and bears. He knows that his strength comes from God and not in his own physical abilities. David is ONLY looking upward at God's infinite abilities verses Goliath's finite human abilities.

Similarly, in the gospels when Peter steps out of the boat to walk on water, as long as he looks towards Jesus he is able to stay afloat. However, as soon as Peter turns to the wind and waves he becomes fearful and begins to sink. When Peter looks inward at his own lacking abilities, just like the Israelites, he becomes frozen in fear.

How many times we do this in our own lives? Maybe it's not a giant like Goliath or walking on water, but maybe it's the loss of a job, a major health diagnosis, or the crisis of an addiction. We all have moments that our "flight or fight" responses kick into high gear. It's in these moments that we have a choice to make. Take a moment to think about your Goliath or those stormy waves in your life right now and answer these questions.

- Are you looking upward like David and moving forward with God-confidence knowing you are operating in God's infinite abilities?
- OR are you operating like the Israelites, frozen in fear, stress and anxiety while comparing your finite human capabilities to this powerful giant your life?

## Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Colossians 3:23** ~Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.
- **Hebrews 11: 35-39** ~So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For, "In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay." And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back." But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.
- **Philippians 1:6** ~Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus
- **Hebrews 10:36** ~You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.
- **James 1:4** ~Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

## Day 3 - Unlikely training ground

**READ:** 1 Samuel 17:31-37

Our vision of a shepherd's life might look like a postcard of peaceful rolling hills with trickling streams, cute little sheep, and a lazy shepherd under a tree casually watching his flock. In reality, the occupation of an ancient middle-eastern shepherd was anything but lazy or peaceful. It required a vast knowledge of animal behavior, land and resources, weather patterns, and even self-defense. Shepherds had to be physically fit enough to walk long distances to find fresh fields and often had to sleep outdoors with their herd. During the night, shepherds kept watch to fight off predators, including bear, wolves, and lions. For protection most shepherds carried a sling and staff. These are the exact tools that David brought to the battle with Goliath.

We often mistake David's sling for a child's toy sling-shot. The shepherd's sling was not a toy. It was a weapon that could launch projectiles at 60mph over distances of over 150 yards. A good shot could easily bring down a lion or wolf. Young shepherd boys would practice with their slings constantly starting at a very young age and would carry them into adulthood. Most were very skilled because they had to use these weapons often. We see this in the way David is able to launch that direct hit on Goliath.

When David describes his victories with wild animals in verses 34-35, we could misinterpret this as a justification for how qualified he was to fight Goliath. This interpretation leaves out David's key statement in verse 36, "the Lord who delivered me, will deliver me again". David viewed his past victories through the lens of God's deliverance. He knew that it was God alone that delivered him, and that it was God who had equipped him in those battles. While King Saul and the Israelites were looking at their own weaknesses in fear, David was looking at his strength through the promise of God's deliverance.

When we look at the trajectory of David's life, we see his humble beginning as a shepherd as Godly training ground. David went from being a Shepherd, to King Saul's court musician, to armor bearer, to giant slayer & warrior, to eventually King. The time as a shepherd equipped him with a strong foundation of faith, physical strength to be a great warrior, knowledge of the land when he needed to hide as he ran for his life, and even as a musician and poet which was common among shepherds to soothe their sheep. David's life shows us that even in a humble moment, you could be on Godly training ground.

- As you walk through struggles in your life, are you fearfully looking at your own weaknesses like the Israelites? Or are you looking at your strengths through the lens of God's promises?
- Are there areas in your life that might be a "training ground" for God's greater purpose? How would this change the way that you view this time of equipping in your life?

## Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Luke 16:10** ~"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.
- **Psalm 77: 11-15** ~I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds." Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
- **John 15: 5-8** ~"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

## Day 4 - Intentionally equipped

**READ:** 1 Samuel 17: 38-58

When we talk about being equipped for something we might think about our abilities, skills and knowledge. We probably also think about the physical equipment or supplies that are required. For example, someone said that they were "equipped" to hike the Appalachian trail we would assume they had spent many months of physical training, trail guides, camping equipment, support for stops along the way, and some sturdy boots for sure!

When we look at David being equipped to fight Goliath we see this intentional equipping by God in his life. As we talked about yesterday with the "training ground" that God gave him, David was intentionally equipped with the physical, mental and spiritual training to fight Goliath. God also equips David with the weapons and equipment that he will need to fight Goliath with his shepherd's sling. However, King Saul doesn't recognize this Godly intentional equipping when he encourages David to wear his armor and carry his weapons. When others look at David they can't see the ways that God has equipped him. As David attempts to wear Saul's armor, he quickly discovers that it's not right. It doesn't fit and he's uncomfortable wearing someone else's equipping. This makes the battle between David and Goliath visibly even more dramatic. Goliath is dripping in armor and fancy weaponry as compared to David only wearing a simple shepherd's sling without the armor of a warrior going into battle. There is a stark contrast in being equipped by God versus being equipped by self.

From a spiritual perspective, what does it look like to allow God's intentional equipping in our lives? Which of these are you struggling with today?

- **Faithful** - Luke 16:10 - David was faithful in the hidden training ground. He showed up consistently, chose integrity when no one was watching, and embraced the season of shepherding. When we are in those "training ground" seasons of life, remember that your time is not wasted. Being faithful in the small things will allow God to transform and equip you.
- **Glory** - Psalm 77:11 - David didn't find confidence in himself, instead he remembered what God had done in his life. When we can look at our past through the lens of Godly equipping, past faithfulness can fuel present trust. God's character never changes. Therefore, remembering to give Him the glory for all the goodness in our past will build the faith we need for our future.
- **Dependence** - John 15:5 - David may have used the sling to fight Goliath, but he first declared "the battle is the Lord's". God doesn't ask us to fight with what we don't have. Often, He calls us to use what's in our hands in obedience to Him, to trust that He be the strength and power that we need in that moment.

## Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Psalm 20:7** ~Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

- **2 Corinthians 12: 9-10**

~But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- **Galatians 1:10** ~Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ

- **Matthew 11: 28-30**

~"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

## Day 5 - Living dependently

In our world today there is a high value placed on independence. As humans we like to be in control, make our own decisions, and fight our own battles. We celebrate and encourage things like self-confidence, self-reliance, self-esteem, and self-help. However, God's way of doing things is often the opposite of the world's. When we live dependently on God verses independently in our own strength, then we can experience a life full of His abundant & unlimited resources verses in our own human limitations.

One of the hardest parts about living dependently is surrendering the outcome. Before the battle, David declares that the outcome is the Lord's. Truly living dependently on God means focusing on obedience more than the outcome or the results. We won't always know God's plans or the full picture. Often, we have to trust that it is good, BEFORE we know the how and why.

Sometimes it is hard to discern independence and control because they are so ingrained in us. Let's look at a checklist to ask ourselves, "Am I living God-dependently or independently right now?"

1. **Have I invited God in?** - Have I jumped straight into fixing, planning and reacting? OR have I paused and invited God into that process? Am I giving God step-by-step instructions? OR am I leaving the results and the whole process up to Him?
2. **What am I trusting MOST?** - Am I trusting in my own abilities, experience or control? OR am I fully trusting in God's character, power, faithfulness and presence?
3. **What is my internal dialogue?** - Am I saying "I need to figure this out"? Do I feel like it all depends on me? OR am I saying "God is with me and He will guide me"? Am I remembering the past faithfulness of the Lord in my life?
4. **Am I trying to control?** - Am I overthinking, striving or gripping tightly to my own goals? Do I feel the need to be 100% certain before moving forward? Am I carrying responsibility that isn't mine? OR am I focused on obedience and surrendering the results to Him? Can I take the next right step God has given me without knowing the full picture yet?
5. **How am I responding to others?** - Am I trying to wear "Saul's armor" and do it someone else's way? Am I letting criticism or pressure sway me? OR am I walking and operating in the way that God uniquely wired me to be? Am I staying anchored in the truth of who and what God has called me to be?

Whether you are facing a huge giant or going through a slow season of "training ground", prayerfully ask the Lord to help you to **5** move towards living dependently on Him.