

Men's Sunday Night
A Study in the Life of David
A Man After God's Own Heart
Lesson 2 – 1 Samuel 17-21
The Victorious Solider

Chapter 17

The story of David and Goliath is familiar and carries with it many practical lessons for the Christian life. All of us face giants of one kind or another, but we may overcome them through the power of God. Goliath was probably ten feet tall, with armor weighing over 150 pounds. He was “the Philistine,” their great champion, and so terrifying was he that he threw the Jewish army into panic. Had Saul been a godly leader, he would have claimed Deuteronomy 20 and led his army to victory, but when people are out of fellowship with God, they can only lead others into defeat. David arrived with provisions for his brothers, and immediately he was interested in the challenge of the giant. David had proved the power of God privately in the fields caring for his sheep; now he would demonstrate this power publicly to the glory of God.

The practical lesson here is that God gives victory in response to our faith. God had tested David privately with a lion and a bear; now he was to test him openly with a giant. Too often God's people fail at the smallest test that comes their way, little realizing that the “little tests” are but preparation for the bigger battles that are sure to come.

There is also a typical lesson here, for David is a picture of Jesus Christ. David's name means “beloved,” and Christ is God's beloved Son. Both were born in Bethlehem. Both were rejected by their brethren. David was anointed king years before he was permitted to reign, just as Christ is King now but will not reign on earth until Satan is banished. King Saul typifies Satan in this present age; for Saul was rejected and defeated, yet permitted to reign until David came to the throne. Satan is permitted to persecute God's people, yet one day he will be defeated.

Chapter 18-21

These chapters form the transition between David's service in Saul's court and his exile as a fugitive. They explain how David was moved from being Saul's favorite to being Saul's enemy. The main issue here is David's faith, and we can see in

these chapters how this man of God all but lost his confidence in God because of the trials that came to his life. David's greatest test of faith was not when he faced Goliath; it was when he had to serve daily in Saul's court.

Read 1 Samuel 17:1-58 and answer the following questions:

1. What was happening just as David arrived where the army was camped? (17:20-23)

2. How confident was young David when he met the king? What was David's answer to the Philistine champion's boasting?

3. In the story of David and Goliath, what 'weapons' were the most powerful?

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-30 and answer the following questions:

4. How did the officers and people of Israel respond to David's successes and promotions? (18:5) What chorus was heard in the streets when Saul and David returned from the battle in which Goliath was slain? (18:7)

5. How did Saul feel about David's popularity? (18:8-9) What two facts irritated Saul most about David? (18:28)

6. Why was Saul afraid of David even though Saul was king? What were some evidences that "the Lord was with David"?

Read 1 Samuel 19:1-24 and answer the following questions:

7. What were some of Jonathan's reasons that Saul should not harm David? (19:4-5)

8. What incident occurred inside Saul's house? What plan did Saul set in motion when he was unable to kill David with his spear? (19:9-11)

9. Why did Saul want to murder a man who did him no wrong?

Read 1 Samuel 20:1-42 and answer the following questions:

10. What was the difference between David and Jonathan's perceptions of Saul's behavior? What situation did David and Jonathan set up to test Saul's intentions toward David?

11. What promise did Jonathan make to David before God? What promise did Jonathan ask David to make to him? (20:12-15)

12. What does it say about Jonathan that he chose to remain loyal to David, even to the point of working against his own father's commands?

Read 1 Samuel 21:1-15 and answer the following questions:

13. How did David explain the fact that he was alone?

14. How might the story have turned out differently if David had told the priest that he was fleeing from Saul?

15. Why was David's gimmick (pretending to be insane) effective in getting Achish to dismiss him as a threat?

The Value of Friendships Between Men

Many men today have numerous acquaintances but few real friends. As a result, a man can feel lonely, isolated, and misunderstood. Even if he is married to a supportive wife whom he has good communication, he can feel an emptiness inside, because no one knows his soul "man to man." David and Jonathan shared a rare and valuable friendship. Their bond serves as a model for men today who need and seek healthy relationships with other men. Perhaps the key, as with any relationship, is trust and loyalty. That was the basis of David and Jonathan's companionship. Why else would a child of royal privilege risk friendship with a rural shepherd boy who was an enemy of the family. Jonathan's family had experienced what today would be called severe dysfunction. Perhaps insecure and troubled he was drawn to David because he was recognized as someone who would be true and faithful. As the two young men got to know each other, they formalized their commitment to each other. If you are a man, are you prepared to enter into this kind of profound trust and loyalty with another man? It may mean sacrifice, just as Jonathan ultimately lost his relationship with his father Saul in order to fulfill his pledge to David. Some things are worth paying dearly for. A solid friendship that lasts through the years is one of them.