

Be a Man After God's Heart: Study Six
Ut Prosim

"David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.'"¹

Of all the stories in the Bible, David and Goliath may be one of the most told and well loved. Rather than re-telling the story here, we want to focus on three key pieces of David's decision that led to an attitude of Ut Prosim – "That I May Serve."

First, it is evident that David possessed "divinely guided insight that others lacked" that allowed him to see both the problem and the solution.² "Now the Israelites had been saying, 'Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel.'"³ The Israelite army was terrified by Goliath as he came out day after day, morning and evening, to issue his challenge. They saw him as "this man," but David calls him what he really is, asking, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" The petrified warriors only saw an insurmountable obstacle to victory. David saw an arrogant man who couldn't help but fall before the majesty and power of the living God. Goliath was the problem, God's power and sovereignty was the solution.

David was motivated to serve by his faith in God's character and His power. When Saul rebuts his offer to fight

Goliath, saying he is too young and too weak, David is prepared with an answer: "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."⁴ David has personal experience with the goodness and faithfulness of God and a sharp memory. Too often we allow ourselves to remember our failures rather than God's successes. It is important to train our minds in such a way that our faith is made stronger through calling to remembrance the authority and reliability of our Father in past circumstances.

Last, but perhaps most importantly, "David was aware of the means by which the victory would be accomplished. He understood that faith in Yahweh was the determining factor."⁵ His declaration to Goliath makes the source of his confidence unmistakable:

You have come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ...the battle is the Lord's...

David's weakness wasn't his focus, he knew where his power came from and that victory didn't depend on him.

¹ 1 Samuel 17:32

² The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel. p. 267

³ 1 Samuel 17:25

⁴ 1 Samuel 17:37

⁵ The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel. p. 267

In Saul we see a stark contrast to David's perspective, faith, and confidence. The writer of 1 Samuel makes it very clear that "on hearing the Philistine's [challenge], Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified."⁶ The king of Israel, who we know stood "a head taller than any of the others," is the natural choice for the champion of his people. But instead, we find him cowering in his tent, more than willing to hand over his armor to David so that *he* might fight the battle. Rather than seeing Goliath for what he was, a man defying the Lord; rather than remembering the salvation God worked for His people, especially through the weak things of the world; rather than depending on God to defend His honor and protect His people; Saul has turned from the Lord, even as He turned from him. Saul was right, he could not have won the battle, but neither could David, unless the Lord gave it into his hand.

Do you look at situations through God-tinted glasses, asking for His perspective? Or do you allow the perceptions of those around you, or your own vision, to justify cowardice? Remembering, not only the promises of God, but also His past successes, is key to becoming a man who shows up when he is needed that he may serve. Approach the battle in light of God's strength and character. When God calls you into something He will give you the will and the ability to do it.⁷ So fear not and walk boldly into difficult and impossible situations that you may serve God, for His glory and for the good of His people.

⁶ 1 Samuel 17:11

⁷ Philippians 2:13

Scripture Reading: NIV

1 Samuel 17:2-4, 8-16, 20-51

2 Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. 3 The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them. 4 A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.

8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." 11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. 12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was very old. 13 Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, 15 but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. 16 For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand. 20 Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. 21 Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. 22 David left his things

with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. 23 As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. 24 Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear. 25 Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel." 26 David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" 27 They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him." 28 When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle." 29 "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?" 30 He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. 31 What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. 32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." 33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear;

this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you." 38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. 41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!" 45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands." 48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. 50 So

David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. 51 David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

Partner Assignment:

1. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 17:47, *"All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."*
2. This week re-read 1 Samuel 17 and read 1 Samuel 18.
3. Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on 1 Sam. 17-18.
 - A. What were some of the external obstacles David faced when he hinted at and then declared his intentions to face Goliath?
 - B. What are some of the internal obstacles he might have faced?
 - C. Chapter 18 is all about the aftermath of David's willingness to serve, what are some of the triumphs and some of the (probably unexpected) anguishes that David dealt with after the Lord gave Goliath into his hand?

Sample Discussion Questions for Study Six

Pre-Article Questions:

1. How would you describe one the greatest acts of service someone has done for you?

2. What do you think it takes to serve a family member, friend, or God well?

Text Questions:

1. Compare Goliath's armor and weapons with David's. What pieces are listed? What were their typical purposes?
2. What were the terms of Goliath's challenge?
3. Why did David call Goliath an "uncircumcised Philistine?" What did this title signify? *Hint: Circumcision was the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham, promising to make him a great nation and sealing his descendants as God's people. Goliath wasn't circumcised so he was not a partaker in the covenant and represented a threat to God's people and an enemy of God.*
4. Look at all the times David speaks in this chapter. How many times does he mention God and what does he say about Him?

Application Questions:

1. The first quality we discussed that enabled David to volunteer in the Lord's service was divine perception, that is, God gave him insight into the situation. Is there a situation in your life that seems overwhelming in which you need divine insight? If you are comfortable, share with the group so that we can look at God's perspective from the Word together.
2. The second quality we talked about was zeal for God and David's assurance of God's goodness and faithfulness. He had a good memory for God's

successes. Do you? Talk about a time when the Lord worked on your behalf to help you with an impossible obstacle.

3. Do you get upset when someone defames the name of Jesus? Or do you let it pass and stay silent like Saul? Are you willing to stand up for the honor of your God? How can you speak truth in love in this kind of situation? When are you called to act?
4. The third quality David possessed was confidence that his God was the key to the victory. Do you believe that God is for you and not against you? What effect would this kind of confidence have in your daily interaction with friends, classmates, professors, etc? What effect would it have in situations that seem insurmountable?
5. Are you willing to serve even when the odds are not in your favor? Do you go out of your way to serve? Why or why not? How can we support you, as a small group, as you grow in seeing things from God's perspective, faith in God's goodness and faithfulness, and confidence that the battle is the Lord's?