

The life of David is a fantastic and fascinating portrait of winning in the face of opposition.

David's life provides us with tactical insights for some of the biggest challenges we face. David was King of Israel, a man of war and an impact-player in God's plan through the ages. He was a "man's man"—a powerful point of reference from which every man can learn.

We are starting today with the most familiar event of David's life because it provides the background and demonstrates what it means to "man up!" in the face of opposition.

1 Samuel 17 describes the events in HD clarity:

The Battlefield—Valley of Elah— 1 Samuel 17:2

The Opposition—Goliath of Gath and the Philistine Army— 1 Samuel 17:4

The Crisis—No one wanted to face Goliath—1 Samuel 17:11

The Volunteer—David said, "I will go."—1 Samuel 17:32

The Weapons—Swords and shields vs. sling and stones— 1 Samuel 17:5-7, 38-40

The Results—"a head in hand"—1 Samuel 17:48-51

In this section of Scripture, there is a reference to a specific action that can be easily overlooked, but it is of great consequence. In 1 Samuel 17:40, we are told that David chose five smooth stones. Why five? We are not told the reason in Scripture, but some people have suggested that Goliath had four brothers! The truth of the number is unknown, but we do know from Scripture these five stones represented David's arsenal of war against Goliath.

As I began to plan and prepare for this series, I thought, "Five stones? . . . Why not use our five weeks together to address some battles we face today?" As a result, I titled this series, "Five For Fighting: Tactical Insights From the Life of David." Today, we will address the battle of *intimidation*. Let's get started!

Life is Filled With Giant-Sized Challenges

No one can avoid challenges in life. Some challenges could be physical, financial, intellectual, circumstantial, relational, occupational, etc. But just as Goliath terrorized the soldiers of Israel two times a day for forty days, the distractions and disruptions of life can get in your face and challenge your response. Some men try to deny them; others simply delay. While fear could paralyze your response, faith calls you to action!

Every Giant You Face Creates Either Intimidation or Competition

Unlike the men in 1 Samuel 17:31 who trembled on the sideline, David forged ahead in a "man up moment" and said, "I will go!"



FAITH IN THE PLACE OF INTIMIDATION

It was not a pretty picture. David saw Goliath—the Tower of Terror. But God was as real to David as Goliath was to the soldiers.

What made the difference? The God-factor. David realized Goliath was not bigger or stronger than God! And as a result, David refused to bow down in terror to the defiant, trash talk of Goliath. While the soldiers of Israel saw Goliath and thought, "He is too big to face," David saw Goliath and thought, "He is too big to miss."

Do you find yourself losing perspective when faced with life's battles? It's often easy to do. The Apostle Paul recognized life would have challenges and wrote to young Timothy in Timothy's early days of ministry, "... for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7 ESV).

Faith does not blind us to external circumstances. Circumstances are real, dangerous, defiant, etc. However, faith does give us sight to see beyond the circumstances to draw on God's power.

David not only was up against the opposition of a giant, but also the opposition of his brother, Eliab.

Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." —1 Samuel 17:28

Eliab's cold and calloused heart brought rebuke and resistance to what David was wanting to do through faith. When you face challenges, be prepared to be sneered at and scolded by the disheartened and disobedient.

There are two ways people can put you down:

1. Intimidation—Goliath
2. Criticism—David's brother, Eliab

Great pain can come from those who, through petty self-absorption, attempt to keep you from making a winning play. David's only aspiration was to be God's man and to fulfill God's mission for God's people. David's goal was to get this thing back on course and do it God's way, giant or no giant.

My advice to you when you are confronted with challenges is to *major on the majors*. If you don't, you can easily be distracted by minor issues and never do what really matters.

God is Equipping You Today for Battles You will Face Tomorrow

Read 1 Samuel 17:12, 15, 17, 20-24

From the battle field, we quickly pan to Bethlehem, a quiet and serene farming community. We find David, the least of Jesse's sons, leaving the fields at the request of his father to take provisions to his brothers. Even though David had once played a harp to comfort the king, David was unaware of the stalemate that had come to the nation through the fear of Saul and the force of Goliath.

When David reached his brothers on the front lines of battle, he could not believe what was happening. David was out of place, but not out of perspective. He believed God's people should live purposefully and powerfully. But what he found were men clamoring and stammering before Goliath. David purposed in his heart to be God's man and face Goliath's challenge through God's power.

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars. —2 Chronicles 16:9 ESV

God desires to use you, and He will use you if you surrender your heart to Him—surrender your anxieties, limitations, excuses, etc. God led David and God continues to lead today. God can be trusted and often uses the little things to accomplish big things in your heart.

⁶ Then he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts"... ¹⁰For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth."

—Zechariah 4:6, 10 ESV

God is Faithful in the Fight

God was as real to David as Goliath was to the soldiers. The issue was not the size of David's faith, but the size of David's God. Are you limiting God in your life? What are the "giants" in your life? Trash talk? Courage in the face of opposition? Limitations?

David's testimony is clear: God is bigger than your battles and He will deliver you in the fight. Faith is the first weapon needed for battle—don't leave home without it! A life without faith is a life that is sure to experience defeat.