

THE WHOLE STORY

From Genesis to Revelation

1 Samuel 17

Introduction:

This week in *The Whole Story*, we come to one of the most famous stories of the Bible: David and Goliath. As we've seen in 1 Samuel, Saul was the king Israel wanted, but he was not the king Israel needed to rescue them from their true enemy: unbelief. In chapter 17, we see David demonstrate his qualifications as Israel's king and give us a picture of the Christ to come.

As you study this story with your small group, pay close attention to the themes of *strength vs. weakness* and *confidence vs. fear* that show up throughout the narrative.

This Week's Main Focus:

The strength of those who trust in God is greater than the strength of those who trust in themselves.

In ancient combat, there was a custom to have opposing sides choose a champion to fight to determine the outcome of an entire battle. The word translated "champion" here literally means "the man of the between."¹ Goliath stood between his people, the Philistines, and Israel. We see Goliath's confidence as the champion in his physical strength. The narrator describes him as nine and a half feet tall, armor weighing 125 pounds, with a 15-pound spear. Israel's trust is revealed by how they fear the giant and put their confidence — or lack thereof — in their own physical strength. Forty days pass as the people of Israel wait on the sidelines for a champion of their own to meet Goliath's challenge.

And a champion does arrive, but not in the form that the people expect. David comes forward and his confidence isn't in outward strength, but strength that comes from the LORD, as he displays his trust in the one who can deliver him. Despite the Philistine champion's confidence in his flesh, it takes only a flick of the wrist combined with the providential hand of God to crush Israel's enemy.

While there are many lessons to learn from the story of the boy who conquered the giant, we want to highlight the differences between *those who trust in their own strength* and *those who trust in the strength of the LORD*. The point of this study is not for your group to list the "Goliaths" in everyone's life. Rather, that David is the anointed king whom God uses to defeat the *biggest* enemy of the people of Israel: unbelief. He is a picture of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who defeats the biggest enemy of all the people of the whole world.

Sermon Response Question:

1) This weekend Pastor J.D. said, "a giant in your life is anything that keeps the kingdom of God from going forward." Based off that definition, what is a giant in your life and how do you need to look to Jesus as your champion?

¹ Chester, Tim. *1 Samuel For You*. (128)

Bible Study Questions: **Read 1 Samuel 17:1-58** (4 readers: 1-11, 12-27, 28-47, 48-58)

2) Make a list comparing and contrasting David and Goliath's physical characteristics.

3) Describe Goliath's challenge to Israel. What does he specifically say and how does Israel respond to Goliath's challenge?

Bonus-Challenge Question: When else in Israel's past have they been crippled by fear because of giants? How is that similar to our story today?

4) After looking at this familiar story, what would you say is the main point of this passage?

5) Anytime we read a story, we want to picture ourselves as one character or another. Who does the author intend the reader to picture themselves as when reading this story?

(Hint: The answer to this question will help us understand the main point of the passage!)

Group Application Questions:

6) David finds courage and strength by looking back on God's past faithfulness as assurance of his future faithfulness (defeating lions and bears were the training ground for defeating the giant). Share a specific example when God has been faithful to you in the past and a way that past example can help you trust God more for a present struggle?

7) The story of David and Goliath is a very recognizable one to our culture. How would you explain the gospel of Jesus Christ to a non-Christian based on this passage if you heard them use it as a reference?

Prayer: **Read Psalm 119:57-64**

- Praise God for being sufficient to be our portion in life even in the midst of hurt and lacking and for being gracious to us according to his promises. (57,58)
- Confess specific ways you have turned away from God's commands or have delayed in keeping his commands. (59,60)
- Thank God that no sin, past, present or future, can keep us from praising and fellowshiping with God through Jesus Christ. (61,62)
- Ask God to strengthen the relationship in your small group so that you can grow toward Christ together and as a group be a witness to the world of his love. (63,64)