

# How to Kill Giants

M. W. Bassford

8-2-09

## Introduction.

- A. Most people are woefully ignorant of what can be found between the covers of the Bible, but there are a few stories that even people who aren't churchgoers have heard before. Everybody knows about Adam and Eve eating the fruit in the garden of Eden, even though they think it's an apple. Everybody knows about Jonah being swallowed by the great fish, even though they think it's a whale. Another story that shows up in this top five list is the story of David and Goliath. We all know the basic storyline: shepherd boy with sling kills giant in armor. All of us have seen pictures of it, and most of us have heard sermons about it. I certainly have.
- B. Sometimes, though, I think that this great familiarity with the story causes us to miss the point. We've heard it so many times that we don't make the connection between David and Goliath and us. We think, "Yeah, shepherd boy beats giant, but the shepherd boy was David, and David was special, so what David did can't have anything to do with me." The thing is, though, the special element in the story isn't David. It's God. It's about how God and His power can use an untrained youth to beat the mightiest warrior alive.
- C. That's something that we need to get, because all of us have giants to face in our own lives too. Maybe our marriage isn't what it ought to be, and we despair of making it any better. Maybe our finances are out of control, and we don't know how to rein them in. Maybe we're stuck in a constant, losing battle with any one of a million different sins. Those things are our Goliaths, and if we're on our own, they cow us just as much as Goliath cowed Israel. However, even the most intimidating giant is no match for the power of God. Just like God led David to victory, He can lead us to victory too. Let's study that story for clues on how to kill giants.

## I. Before the Battle.

- A. Even before we get into the midst of our struggle with our giant, there are a number of useful attitudes that we need to adopt. The first principle is **DON'T BE INTIMIDATED**. We see Saul and the rest of the Israelites failing in this in 1 Samuel 17:4, 10-11. It's easy to understand why Saul and the others would have been frightened. Goliath was six cubits and a span tall, which in our measurements would be about nine and a half feet. He was a warrior, too, so he surely would have had a build to match. In other words, Goliath would have made Shaquille O'Neal look like Tiny Tim. If he matched up against an Israelite warrior, it would have looked like an adult man squaring off against your average six-year old. As a result, all the men of Saul's army assumed that Goliath was unbeatable. His size scared them off from even attempting to fight him.
- B. We often have to address the same problem as we face our giants. Satan loves to make his champions look as big and nasty and invincible as possible, so that we too just cower in fear. Let me pick just one example. Because we've had so many different Bible classes in so many different formats in Joliet recently, we've had to ask a wide variety of members to teach, and many of the brothers and sisters there were deathly afraid of public speaking. For them, it's a giant they had to fight to serve God. It was so heartening to me, though, to see several of those Christians stand up and teach despite their fear, because they had work to do for the Lord. Without exception, I heard that every one of those Christians did a great job. If we want to beat our giants, we have to have the same attitude. We have to refuse to be intimidated and step up and fight.
- C. Second, we have to **IDENTIFY THE GOAL**. Saul tries to bribe his men into fighting Goliath with the promise of all kinds of rewards, but David sees what the real goal is in 1 Samuel 17:26. The real reason why Goliath needed to be beaten wasn't to get money, fame, and women. It was because his continued challenge was a reproach against Israel and a defiance of the armies of God. David wasn't averse to the other things, but he knew that he had to fight because the consequences of not fighting were intolerable.
- D. Similarly, we need to understand why we must fight. We need to understand what God's goals are for our lives, and resolve to accomplish those goals, no matter who stands in our way. When we dangle helplessly in the grip of sin, it is a reproach against us and against the entire church. When we're scared off from working for the Lord or saving the lost, we're allowing Satan to defy God and the chosen instruments of His will. Brethren, we can't stand for that. How dare the forces of evil make us look like chumps! How dare the spiritual enemies of God make it look, even for a second, like they've got Him on the run! The goals God sets before us are the most important goals on earth. We need to recognize them and pursue them.
- E. In this, we must also **IGNORE THE SCOFFERS**. Goliath wasn't the only servant of Satan in the valley of Elah that day. Look at what happens as David is asking about Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:28-29. David's brother Eliab, though he's not willing to fight Goliath himself, doesn't want David around either. He sneers at David, and David gives his older brother the big brush-off and goes back to preparing his challenge to Goliath.
- F. Sometimes, when we resolve to fight our giants, we too face scoffing from the same place. When we announce that this time, we're going to lose that 25 pounds, or this time, we're going to live better Christian lives, it's often our own family members who try to tear us down. They mock us for wanting to be better than

we were before. I don't know why this happens, but it happens all the time. When it happens, difficult though it may be, we need to be like David. We need to shut out the scoffers and prepare for battle anyway.

- G. Finally, even before the day of battle comes, we need to **REMEMBER THE PAST**. David does this quite effectively in his conversation with Saul in 1 Samuel 17:36-37. David's basic point is that he's made it through other challenges before. Lions and bears aren't lightweight adversaries either, but David has fought against them and killed them before, and he did it with the help of God. Why would fighting Goliath be any different? Because he has experienced the blessing of God before, he believes he'll see that blessing once again.
- H. Likewise, friends, just about all of us can take heart from the experiences of our past. We don't have to be Christians very long before we see God active and working in our lives. We see the way He rescues us from sin, and we know that He gets us through hard times in our lives that we couldn't manage on our own. The reason why all of us are here today is because we've had His help to get here. Friends, if God hasn't abandoned us yet, why would He abandon us when we've got this giant looming in our path that we have to fight? If God got us through all those other things, why wouldn't He give us victory over this new problem too? God is faithful, brethren, and His work in the past can give us confidence in His help in the future.

## II. The Battle Itself.

- A. Once we get to the point of the actual conflict, the first thing we need to remember to do is **DON'T TRUST MAN'S WAYS**. David goes down this path in 1 Samuel 17:38-39. Saul, in an obviously well-intentioned gesture, gives David his armor, but because David's still probably a teenager at this point, he's barely able to move in them. As a result, he strips them off and returns to the shepherd's tools he had before.
- B. In the same way, if we try to adopt the methods of man in serving God, those things will encumber us and keep us from success too. When the product of human wisdom runs counter to what God says, it will only doom us to failure. I think we see a marvelous example of this in the realm of child-rearing. I know that all of you who are parents of small children struggle constantly with how to train your children to behave in a civilized way. It's a giant that every parent faces. Man's wisdom says, "Don't spank or physically discipline your child, because it's all just child abuse." For those parents who don't spank, how does that work out for them? Do they usually have these well-behaved, model children? Or do they end up with out-of-control brats who have to be bribed not to pitch a fit in Wal-Mart? Man's wisdom weighs those parents down just like Saul's armor weighed David down. Instead, we have to turn to the word for wisdom on raising our children.
- C. On the other hand, we do need to **TRUST GOD'S POWER**. David's trust in God is evident in his conversation with Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:43, 45. Goliath sneers at David because David is coming to him with sticks and stones. David replies, "Buddy, my real weapons aren't my staff and my sling. My real weapon is the God in whose name I come, and through Him, I'm going to kill you." David understood what the battle was about. He knew that he could come with a bunch of daisies in his hand, but God would still give him victory.
- D. Likewise, when the time comes for us to go toe to toe with our giants, we must remember that it's God who will give us victory too. If we do what is right and pursue His will with a resolute heart, He is sure to bless us. This can be hard to believe when God is invisible and our foes are all too visible, but it's true. I doubt that anybody on either side was expecting David to win, but David knew that God had Goliath outclassed. Today, God and His power still outclass anything Satan can throw against us. It's simple: if we trust, we win.
- E. As part of that trust, we must also **ACT DECISIVELY**. We see David's decisiveness in 1 Samuel 17:48-49. When the time for the battle comes, he doesn't dither around on his own side of the battlefield, waiting for Goliath to come up and pin him to the ground. Instead, he takes the battle to Goliath, and perhaps even before the giant has a chance to react, he nails him with a stone between the eyes and mortally wounds him. Goliath was the one with the size and strength and weapons and armor, but he didn't stand a chance.
- F. We too can't dither around when the time comes to face our giants. Once we know what God wants us to do, we need to do it. I can't help but wonder how many people there are going to be in hell who knew precisely what they needed to do to go to heaven, had it all planned out, but just didn't have the guts to do it. By contrast, every redeemed soul in heaven is going to be there because they did what they had to do to get there. The choice is ours. Are we doers and giant-slayers, or are we ditherers and giant victims?
- G. Finally, though, once we have acted, we need to **FOLLOW UP**. David does this in 1 Samuel 17:50-51. It's hard to tell from the text what exactly is going on here, but my best understanding of it is that David struck the decisive blow with his sling, but Goliath, even though he was incapacitated, wasn't totally dead yet. David solved that problem by rushing over, taking Goliath's own sword out of its sheath, finishing off Goliath, and chopping off his head. Once David did that, the Philistines fled in fear, and Israel won the battle.
- H. Sometimes, following through like that is a challenge for us. Once we've got our giants on the ground, we've got a nasty tendency to lose interest and wander off. We give the giant a chance to go to the hospital and recuperate, so, six months later, he's back at full strength, and we have to fight the same battle again. Let's not do that. Once we've gained the victory through God, we have to keep the pressure on. We have to keep sin on the run. We have to keep the work going forward. Only then can we truly succeed.

**Conclusion.** If you want the Lord's help in slaying your giants, turn your life over to Him today.