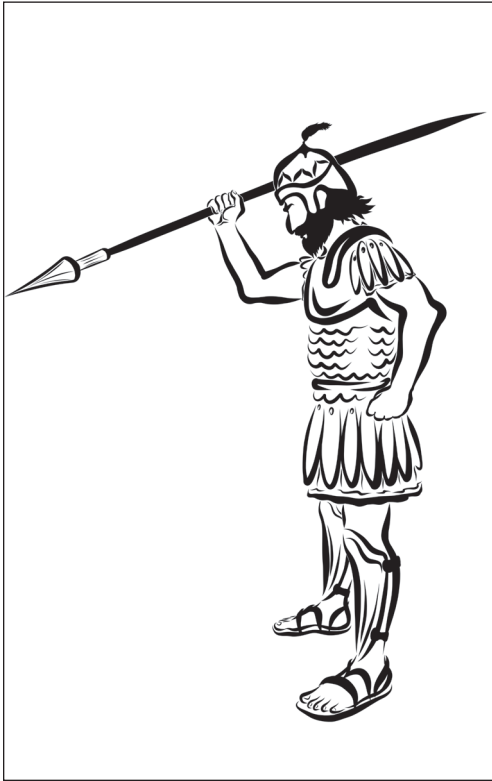


David & Goliath



Colour me!



1 Samuel 17:31-50

Saul, the king of Israel, was facing a major problem. His country was at war with the Philistines. The Philistine army had a hero named Goliath who was over nine feet tall. He wore a bronze helmet and had a bronze armour to protect his chest and legs. He kept insulting Israel and the God of Israel. When the Israelite soldiers saw Goliath, they were scared and ran off.

Saul sent for David, and David came. "Your Majesty," he said, "this Philistine shouldn't turn us into cowards. I'll go out and fight him myself!" "You don't have a chance against him," Saul replied. "You're only a boy, and he's been a soldier all his life."

But David told him: "Your Majesty, I take care of my father's sheep. And when one of them is dragged off by a lion or a bear, I go after it and beat the wild animal until it lets the sheep go. If the wild animal turns and attacks me, I grab it by the throat and kill it. Sir, I have killed lions and bears that way, and I can kill this worthless Philistine. He shouldn't have made fun of the army of the living God! The LORD has rescued me from the claws of lions and bears, and he will keep me safe from the hands of this Philistine." "All right," Saul answered, "go ahead and fight him. And I hope the LORD will help you."

Saul had his own military clothes and armour put on David, and he gave David a bronze helmet to wear. David strapped on a sword and tried to walk around, but he was not used to wearing those things. "I can't move with all this stuff on," David said. "I'm just not used to it." David took off the armour and picked up his shepherd's stick. He went out to a stream and picked up five smooth stones and put them in his leather bag. Then with his sling in his hand, he went straight toward Goliath.

Goliath came toward David, walking behind the soldier who was carrying his shield. When Goliath saw that David was just a healthy, good-looking boy, he made fun of him. "Do you think I'm a dog?" Goliath asked. "Is that why you've come after me with a stick?" He cursed David in the name of the Philistine gods and shouted, "Come on! When I'm finished with you, I'll feed you to the birds and wild animals!"



David answered: "You've come out to fight me with a sword and a spear and a dagger. But I've come out to fight you in the name of the LORD All-Powerful. He is the God of Israel's army, and you have insulted him too! Today the LORD will help me defeat you. I'll knock you down and cut off your head, and I'll feed the bodies of the other Philistine soldiers to the birds and wild animals. Then the whole world will know that Israel has a real God. Everybody here will see that the LORD doesn't need swords or spears to save his people. The LORD always wins his battles, and he will help us defeat you."

When Goliath started forward, David ran toward him. He put a stone in his sling and swung the sling around by its straps. When he let go of one strap, the stone flew out and hit Goliath on the forehead. It cracked his skull, and he fell facedown on the ground. David defeated Goliath with a sling and a stone. He killed him without even using a sword.

Commentary

David's victory over Goliath is probably one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. It is so encouraging for those who feel they are overwhelmed by impossible challenges or feel bullied by powerful enemies. Teenager David is the underdog, but with God he is a winner against all the odds and to the utter dismay of the Philistine army.

This is more than just a story about the triumph of the weak over the strong, though. David's motivation is the key to what happens. He loves God with all his heart and can't bear to see God insulted by the Philistine champion. It is his faith that makes him strong and able to defeat this giant enemy. He has experienced God's help in the past and knows that God will be with him. As a shepherd for his father's flock, he has discovered God is with him in times of danger, so here on the battlefield he is not afraid. He doesn't need to rely on Saul's heavy armour but, as he tells Goliath later in the story, he comes to the fight 'in the name of the Lord All-powerful'.

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Questions

- ▶ Which part of the David and Goliath story do you like the best?
- ▶ Can you imagine what the soldiers said about David behind his back before he killed Goliath?
- ▶ What do you think they were saying about David after he had won?
- ▶ David could list times when God had helped him in the past. Can you think back to times when God has looked after you as a family?
- ▶ Saul's armour only got in the way for David. Do you think we sometimes try to trust in other things to help us, rather than simply putting our faith in God?



Visual aid

Collect five smooth stones just like David's. Can you link each stone to a reason for trusting in God when faced with a big challenge?



Activity idea

As a shepherd boy, David had learned to use his slingshot effectively. He could be sure of hitting the target first time. Using an elastic band and small bits of rolled-up paper, hold a family competition to see who can knock down a target from a given distance. Make sure you don't break anything!



Prayer idea

David was not only a shepherd but also a musician. Many of the Psalms are said to have been written by him. One of the most famous of the Psalms, is Psalm 23. Read it together, pausing after each verse and turning it into a simple prayer, thanking God for his provision, his guidance, his protection, his blessing and the promise of heaven.

Psalm 23

¹You, LORD, are my shepherd. I will never be in need. ²You let me rest in fields of green grass. You lead me to streams of peaceful water, ³and you refresh my life. You are true to your name, and you lead me along the right paths.

⁴I may walk through valleys as dark as death, but I won't be afraid. You are with me, and your shepherd's rod makes me feel safe. ⁵You treat me to a feast, while my enemies watch. You honour me as your guest, and you fill my cup until it overflows.

⁶Your kindness and love will always be with me each day of my life, and I will live forever in your house, LORD.

Key verse

1 Samuel 17:37

The Lord has rescued me from the claws of lions and bears, and he will keep me safe from the hand of this Philistine.

New Testament story link

2 Timothy 4:16-18

Paul writes to Timothy to tell him how God kept him safe, even when he was faced by terrible danger.



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