

After God's Own Heart: The Life of David

Lesson 2: The Battle Belongs to the Lord

What are some spiritual giants we face in our lives?

Soothing the Soul (16:14-23)

- The first time David and Saul meet is when Saul needs someone to play music that soothes him.
- 16:14 tells us that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. Remember, Saul had already made the decision to disobey God, Samuel had told Saul he will have his kingdom taken from him (16:26-29), and the new king had been anointed.
- 16:14 also describes an “evil” or “distressing” spirit “from the Lord.” This can be a challenging statement, because it seems to imply that God directly sent the evil spirit. Here are a few things to remember – 1. James tells us that God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13). 2. It does not seem like Saul was demon-possessed, because the music would cause the spirit to leave. 3. Even the demons cannot operate outside of God's boundaries. Remember, Satan was limited in his attack on Job by God's boundaries. So, in a sense, God's permissive will can be described by saying this spirit was from God, since ultimately it could not have attacked Saul without God's permission.
- Remember, we have the inspired words of scripture telling us this. We don't need to make statements and predictions today about what is a punishment allowed by God since we don't have that divine insight.
- Chapter 16 provides a clear transition between Saul's reign and the beginning of David's rise to power.

Surveying the Battlefield (17:1-19)

- In verse 11, we see that Saul and the Israelites were greatly afraid. Remember, they wanted a king in order to be like all the other nations, and they got exactly what they wanted – they were scared of battling the Philistines, like other nations.
- In 17:3, we see Goliath on one mountain, while Israel stood on another mountain. Goliath was coming out to taunt them. In 17:23 (40 days later), we see that Goliath is “coming up.” We can't read too much into the language difference, but it seems that Goliath is beginning to come out closer as he shouts his challenge. Refusing to respond to the challenge was not helping.
- What are some challenges we often try to avoid dealing with in our own lives? Why is avoidance an ineffective strategy?

- It seems like it should have been obvious who the enemy was, but insults from David's older brother Eliab could have distracted him. Why would Eliab have been so combative?
- In our lives, we know who the enemy really is, but there are times when we might be sidetracked by someone or something else. Can you think of any distractions that keep us from focusing on the true enemy?

Preparing For Battle (17:20-40)

- What contrasts do we see between Saul and David in this section?
- Saul had already devised an incentive plan to try to get someone else to fight Goliath – great riches, exemption from taxes, and his daughter's hand in marriage. The only problem was that Saul would have been one of the men most qualified to fight Goliath.
- In 17:38-39, Saul tried to give his armor to David. David had not "tested" the armor (he was not used to it), so he went without it, leaving no doubt as to who was really providing the victory.
- Saul might have had the best intentions, trying to help David in battle. It probably would have been an honor to wear that armor, yet it wasn't for David. Do we ever fall into the trap of trying to be like someone else, to "use their armor" in service to God? Can you think of any examples?
- Throughout this process, David seems to be the only one who is unafraid. While the soldiers had been in battle, David had been with the sheep. He had been around God's creation, relying on God to help him overcome wild animals, and he was offended that anyone should taunt God's army. Everyone else saw a giant, but David saw God's power – similar to what Joshua and Caleb saw in Numbers 13:25-33.

Doing Battle (17:41-58)

- David was armed with a sling (not a sling-shot) and five stones. Remember, a sling was a battle weapon, not just a toy. Judges 20:16 mentions 700 men trained to use a sling in battle with pinpoint accuracy.
- David was so confident that he told Goliath exactly what was going to happen, being sure to mention that God was the one in control. How could we use that strategy in our lives as we face our own spiritual giants?
- In 2 Samuel 21:15-22 (also in 1 Chronicles 20:4-8), David's army kills four descendents of the "giant" (which is likely an expression to describe the giant race of "Rephaim" rather than a specific individual). One is described as Goliath's brother. Because David had first killed a giant, his men were able to get past the fear that had once frozen Israel's soldiers and conquer giants as well.
- How can our actions in dealing with our own spiritual giants inspire others? Can you think of someone whose battle with a giant has inspired you to deal with your own challenges?