



David and Goliath



Note: When 'telling Bible stories' to older children or teens, it is important that they come across as authentic and relevant. If you are very familiar with the story yourself, you can just chat casually about it with them. Here is a 'storytelling' that can work with this age group. Use it as a base for your own version. As no photos of any of the participants were available, we decided to use one of a bungee jumper to depict faith.

Introduction: Whenever a little team is up against a big team people talk about 'David and Goliath' contests. But David never saw himself as the 'little guy'. He just knew that he was going to kill Goliath, not because he was young and arrogant but because he knew who his backup was. He knew that his God was bigger than anything Goliath believed in and that he was fighting as the representative of a very powerful God. Maybe afterwards when he looked back, did he think 'Oh wow! Did I really do that?!'

Bible reference: 1 Samuel 17 especially verses 22-26 and 34-50

Story

When he arrived at the battle ground that day no one took much notice of him at first. They were used to seeing him around. He sometimes served as Saul's armour bearer. He wasn't from any of the big clubs so no one really knew who he was. He hadn't yet been part of the line-up nor had a crack at any real action on the field.

They soon started to take notice of him though when he began talking about taking on the Philistine National Champion. What was his name again? No, not the Philistine; everyone knew the name of Goliath. He was a monster of a man, the undefeated Middle East Champion and seasoned warrior. He'd been taunting them for days, undermining their team spirit, challenging them to single combat. They were used to being in the full heat of battle but the thought of being out in front on your own, that was another matter.

King Saul, at 62 was getting a bit old to try new techniques. His son Jonathan was a man of great courage and faith. Too bad he had a knee injury*. He would have been willing to try anyway but his father wouldn't take the risk of letting him. Saul's relationship with God wasn't what it had been, but he still prayed.

When they brought David to him, Saul really wasn't sure at first. He recognized the lad of course. What was his name again? Saul was hesitant but desperate. Did they really have anything to lose? He was sadly too familiar with seeing young men die in battle. So - give the youngster a chance and offer to lend him some decent armour and weapons. It was the least he could do and more than the lad would have had in battle with swords in such short supply.

What went through David's mind¹ as he walked toward the giant? He had compared this to killing a lion or a bear – but lions and bears don't wear bronze helmets that are designed to protect as much of the forehead as possible. David's aim was usually good but there wasn't much of a gap for him to target. This was way harder than anything he had done before.

But God is God. As long as David did his bit, he could rely on the Holy Spirit to help him direct that small missile. He chose the stones carefully. The stones used were often quite large (the size of a cricket ball). Did the Holy Spirit prompt David as he selected the stones? Too big and they would bounce off the helmet. Too small, and would they do the job? A skilled marksman could send a stone whizzing through the air at a speed of 100 miles an hour, injuring or killing their target. No wonder the Benjamites had a whole battalion of slingshot soldiers.

David's training had taught him to arm himself with five stones. You always had to think ahead in battle and killing Goliath could well be the start of the fight rather than the end of it. Not far behind Goliath, was the Philistine army and David was way nearer than the Israelite front line. He was fairly sure how the Philistines would react once their champion was dead.

David was near enough now to start exchanging the usual pre-match banter, designed to undermine the morale of your opponent. A few choice comments about his age and size. No surprises there! At 19, David was still quite skinny even if he was good looking. It would be a few more years before he could boast a six pack.

As the Israelite army strained to watch from a safe distance, many of the soldiers uttered a prayer for David. His own prayer was this:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by your spirit Lord! Not with the help of swords or spears but the power of God will save the people today.” Just focus on God, David!

It was over so fast it was almost difficult to remember how it all happened. No replay here. No medal either. David's trophy was Goliath's head and his weapons.

What was his name again? Saul already knew him but not well. Fast track this one to a position of command. He shows real promise and there's a certain charisma about him too.

Application

Spoiler alert: In the film 'GI Joe: the Rise of Cobra', there's a scene towards the end where 2 of the good guys confront the top 2 bad guys. When the good guys announce that they are going to stop them, the baddies ask "Oh yeah – you and whose army?" The scene then pans out to show that just lurking in the misty waters behind them, there really is this huge force to be reckoned with.

David had a heart of faith and he believed passionately in the power of God. He acted in the name and power of God and did not rely on his own ability. He knew exactly who his back-up ally was and he wasn't deceived by Goliath's show of strength. Someone with the right heart can be used by God in amazing ways.

If you are doing something different or daring and you are sure that God wants you to do this, then don't ever see yourself as the 'little' guy. David didn't. He just knew that he was going to kill Goliath, not because he believed that he was the best but because he knew who his back up was.

¹Background Note about David's comment "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine"

This was not just the way of insulting someone at that time. In the Ancient Near East when tribes made an alliance with each other, it would be sealed in a ceremony where they received a scar. So if you met someone with a scar you had to be careful about how you dealt with him because you didn't know who his back-up might be. Now all Israelite males received a scar when they were circumcised at 8 days old. It was in the shape of a ring and a ring symbolizes eternity. Of course they didn't go around showing it off, but they knew it was there and it was a permanent sign that Almighty God was their eternal ally.

*Knee injury': 'poetic license' used here as there is no reason given for why Jonathan did not fight Goliath.

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