

Who Are Your Giants?

1 Samuel 17:4-14, 32-37, 45-50

Lesson 2

Exploring Faith Bible Study Series

Lesson Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to show God as greater than the giants in our lives. All too often we find ourselves overwhelmed, afraid, and unsure because of life's circumstances. This lesson demonstrates God can be greater than the issues we face every day. God is greater than the giants but not in a negative, domineering, or frightful way. He overcomes our hardships. When we are in relationship with Him the giants of our lives shrink and cease to have control over us.

Ice Breaker:

Invite the group to think for a moment about this question: When you were a child what was your biggest fear? Ask group members to share their responses.

Life Connections:

Use these questions to help your group members to begin to open up with one another and to think about their own lives. The answers to these questions need not be spiritual in nature. The intention is for practical real life responses.

- 1) Why are children afraid of the dark? Because of shadows; because they can't see their parents anymore; because everything takes on a different look when the lights are out.
- 2) What creates fear in people's lives? Bad experiences; they are taught to be afraid of things by parents or friends; pressure to succeed.
- 3) What are your fears? Getting fired; death; losing my family; getting cancer; nuclear attack.
- 4) How do you deal with fears? I work extra hours and stay busy to try to cover them up; I drink; I chew my fingernails; I talk about them.
- 5) How can fear be negative to us? Can lead to bad habits that try to mask our feelings; can make it so we aren't really living life; can control us and make us nervous, anxious people.
- 6) How can fear be positive for us? Can motivate us to do well; help us to deal with hard things in life; protect us from danger.

Scripture's Answers: 1 Samuel 17:4-14, 32-37, 45-50

In this section the Life Connection questions are now related to the passage of Scripture being used in this Bible Study. The answers to the following questions should come from the text as well as out of the individual's hearing and understanding of what they have heard read.

Have a member of the group read the Scripture passage aloud for all to hear. Make sure extra Bibles are available so everyone can follow along.

Introduction:

There are many different ways that we could use this passage to make important life points. However, this lesson is focused on being controlled by fear. We find over and over again the mention of the fear of the Israelite soldiers. They were discouraged and afraid; they felt like there was no hope. Even King Saul, who was supposed to be their fearless leader, did not know what to do.

Everything in the lives of God's people was out of control; they were ruled by fear. Along comes David, childlike, trusting and ruled by God not by fear. David could have listened to the words of doom, the taunts and the laughs and Goliath might have won, but he didn't. David's unwillingness to be controlled by emotions, outside forces or the approval of others allowed God to work through the future king.

7) If you were one of the Israelite soldiers how would you feel? Scared and tired; ready to give up and go home; frustrated and worried.

8) What would you have thought when little David came and said that he was going to take on this mighty giant? I would have laughed at him; I would have wanted to stop him so that he would not be killed; I would have used him as a diversion so that many of us could have attacked Goliath at once.

9) What do you think made David try to kill Goliath? He was young and didn't understand what he was saying; he wanted to help his brothers; he wanted to be respected and honored.

Scripture:

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give all of you into our hands."

As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead.

The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

(1Samuel 17:45-50)

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: The Israelite soldiers, those soldiers that were against Goliath, were getting very frustrated. They had tried everything and they could not win. They were beginning to lose hope. They would have to serve the Philistines. Undoubtedly they were wondering where God was. They were afraid of what the future would hold for them and their families. Along comes a young man who isn't even old enough to be a soldier, he is just bringing food to his big strong brothers. David offers to fight Goliath. Others laughed at him, but David was not afraid.

10) What do you think gave David such courage and resolve? His belief in God; his past experiences with the lion and the bear; his lack of life experience and lack of failure.

11) What is significant about David refusing to wear Saul's armor? One size doesn't fit all; David was very small and couldn't fit into Saul's armor; we can see that David does things in unconventional ways and on his own terms; David didn't need to wear any armor, he could beat Goliath without it.

12) What is significant about David's words to Goliath? He says that God is going to win the battle; he says that God doesn't use weapons; his power isn't in his armor or his weapons, but in God's name.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: David goes about fighting Goliath in ways that no one expected. He was a very young man, too small to fit into armor, too weak to carry a big heavy sword and yet he defeated this great giant that had everybody else afraid. Before he goes into battle he does not say "I am so great, I will be the one to conquer and everyone will honor me for what I have done." Instead he lets his army know and the enemies know, that it is God who is winning the battle through him. Everyone else had been afraid and wondered how they were going to deal with this terrible giant in their lives. David had courage and knew that Goliath was small and powerless in comparison to God's great strength.

We have no need to be afraid because God is bigger than all of our fears. Even when we feel like we are only a little child who can't put on the armor we are offered by the world, when we give our lives over to God, He will banish our fears, give us strength and courage and help us to deal with all of our adversaries.

Reflection:

Invite the group to take a moment to reflect silently on the questions you are going to ask. These questions can be answered or you may choose to allow the members of the group to think about them.

13) What are the giants in your life that cause you to be afraid?

14) What armor are you putting on, or what sword are you carrying to try to protect yourself from these giants?

15) What would make you want to be like David?

Optional Activity Time:

As a way to make the reflection more meaningful in the lives of group members there are two activities to engage in. First, give the group time to write the answers to the reflection questions in a journal they can keep throughout the study time and the week to come. Second, send each group member home with these questions to think about and write about in a journal during the week. When the group gathers together the next time, break the group up into smaller groups and give them the opportunity to share what they have been thinking about since they last met.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: We all face fear everyday. Some of us are ruled by our feelings of fear. That isn't how life has to be. We can see in the life of young David that we can make a choice to live our lives in fear and worry, unsure of what is going to happen next, frozen by the events of our lives, or we can live our lives in God. Living our lives in God means there will still be things to fear, but we can rest in the strong arms of God. Living our lives in God means we have someone on our side who is bigger than our fears and can give us hope when life seems hopeless. I want to be like David because I don't like living afraid. I want to be like David because I can see how God gave him strength and courage to trust and to live free, not captive to fear.

Conclusion:

Take time to pray together before the group leaves. Allow group members to share insights and ask questions they may have.

Possible Prayer:

Dear Jesus,
You know each of our fears. You know the giants in our lives that torment us and taunt us. Will You help us to turn our lives over to You so You can help us overcome our giants and have hope again? Will You help us give up trying to protect ourselves? Help us put our trust in You? We want to be like David, trusting, hopeful, courageous and empowered by You and You alone.
Amen.