

# What To Do When You Have To Fight A Giant

## 1 Samuel 17:1-11

### **Slide 1**

Have you ever asked yourself, what's the worst that could happen in certain situations? Basically, you're asking yourself, "What's the worst-case scenario?"

Now, some people seem to only gravitate to worst-case scenarios, which prevents them from accomplishing anything.

For them, the worst-case is the only case and they just aren't willing to deal with that. This often paralyzes them into inaction.

Therefore, the issue isn't to simply identify what the worst-case scenario might be, you need to prepare to deal with it.

A while back I came across a little book called, "*Worst-Case Scenarios*." As I flipped through the pages, my first thought was, this is really neat.

I now know what to do: If I ever need to fend off a shark, or if I need to jump from a moving car, or if I need to deliver a baby in a taxicab. As a bonus, I know how to survive if my parachute fails to open.

For example, in the book are instructions on how to perform a tracheotomy.

You'll need a first aid kit, a razor blade or very sharp knife, a straw or a ball point pen with the inside removed, and someone who needs a tracheotomy.

Here are the instructions:

1. Find the person's thyroid cartilage (Adam's apple)

2. Move your finger about one inch further down the neck until you feel another bulge. The indentation between the two is where the incision will be made.
3. Take the razor blade or knife and make a half inch horizontal incision.
4. Place your finger inside the slit to open it.
5. Insert the tube in the incision, roughly one-half to one inch deep.
6. Breathe into the tube with two quick breaths.
7. If you've performed the procedure correctly, you should see the chest rise and the person regain consciousness. The book even has pictures.

Over the next few weeks, we're going to be taking a look at some worst-case scenarios from the Bible.

This morning's worst-case scenario comes from 1 Samuel 17:1-11. It's a familiar story, or at least a familiar concept for most people, even if they don't understand it's from the Bible.

In this passage, we meet a man named Goliath, and if you think about it, a story about Goliath isn't complete without talking about David.

Throughout most of its history, Israel had been ruled by a religious ruler called a judge, that type of rule is called a Theocracy, meaning under God.

Some of our politicians today would like it to be that way again, the difference is they want to be God.

But then the people rebelled and demanded a king like all the other nations and so, God appointed Saul.

In the beginning, he was a good king... tall, handsome and smart. He ruled the kingdom of Israel well, but then he began to think, *"I don't need God to tell me what to do, I can think for myself."*

We know what happens when politicians start thinking for themselves. Well, one thing led to another and soon Saul became outright disobedient to God's will for His kingdom.

With that disobedience came military defeats and here we are in 1 Samuel 17. The Israelites were now facing the greatest obstacle in their history. So, what can we learn?

## **Slide 2**

Let's start by looking at the Giant. It seems like there was a bit of a standoff with the Philistines on one mountain and the Jews on the other.

Then, when things were just getting warmed up, we read in 1 Samuel 17:4, *"A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span."*

Well, if nothing else, the story of David and Goliath proved to be a good illustration through the years. You know, small vs. large, good vs. evil, conquering the unconquerable.

But often we fail to realize that the story of David and Goliath is more than just a story, it's a fact.

If you're wondering how big Goliath was, let me tell you... he was very big. The verse I just read tells us that he was six cubits and a span.

A cubit was eighteen inches, and a span was a half a cubit or nine inches.

Eighteen times six is 108 add nine, multiply by 2.54, and divide by a hundred and you get 2.9718 meters. But we're not a metric country, so we need to convert this.

Therefore, multiply 2.9718 by 100, then divide by 2.54 and we get 117 inches which, when we divide by 12, we get 9.75 or 9 feet 9 inches tall. That's tall.

His coat of armor weighed 125 lbs., and that was just a vest. The Bible tells us that his spear was like a weaver's beam, now I don't know what a weaver's beam is, but I do know that the Bible says that the head of the spear itself weighed fifteen pounds.

You may say, "*There isn't anybody who could be that big.*" Well, let me tell you about Robert Wadlow. He was 8'11" and weighed almost five hundred pounds. His shoe size was 37AA.

His hand was a foot long, and he had a ten-foot arm span. When he died in 1940, at the age of 22, he was still growing and needed 8000 calories a day to survive.

If Robert Wadlow could be 8'11", then surely Goliath could be just ten inches taller.

Now, when Goliath entered the field, he put forth a very reasonable proposition to the Israelites.

1 Samuel 17:8-9, "*Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, 'Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.'*"

Think of how many lives would have been saved if, through the years, each nation had sent just out their best man instead of their best men to fight the battles.

Instead, when it comes time for war, the men, that are too old to fight, send the young out to die.

Now I know that at first glance the odds don't seem all that great, what with Goliath being sooo big, and everybody else being sooo small. But don't forget, the Jews had history behind them.

Noah had built an ark, Moses had parted the Red Sea, Abraham had fathered a child when he was hundred, and Joshua brought down the walls of Jericho.

If anything, you'd think that the odds were stacked pretty much against Goliath. Yet, nobody was willing to put their faith on the line. Nobody believed in God enough to take a risk.

They probably thought, *"Oh sure, God could do those things for other people but not for me."* Here's where the rubber meets the road, where our faith either becomes a reality or a fallacy.

We all have giants in our lives. Our problem is that too often, when we think of giants, we cast our eyes fretfully around looking for modern day Goliaths.

It was Sam Shoemaker who said, *"Everybody has a problem, is a problem, or lives with a problem!"* Isn't that the truth.

What's your giant... Unemployment? Illness? Family issues? Interpersonal relationships? Work?

Maybe depression, or temptation, or something unresolved in your past. This is why we need to start by identifying our giants.

As sure as we have giants in our lives, we also have a God who can help us kill our giants just like David killed Goliath.

So, what's step two, after we've identified our giant?

### **Slide 3**

1 Samuel 17:12, *“Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul’s time he was very old.”*

Here we're told that David was the son of Jesse and that he was born in Bethlehem, which of course you remember was the birthplace of Jesus.

We know that he was the youngest of eight sons, but we don't know for sure how old he was at this time, although he would've had to have been younger than twenty or he would've been in the army.

That was who he was, but, in order to understand the story, you need to know who he became... the second and undoubtedly the greatest King of Israel.

He's mentioned 1092 times in the Bible and his exploits read like something off the fiction shelf at your local library. A little something for everybody: sex, violence, mayhem, and treachery.

He captured Jerusalem and brought the ark of the covenant there. He turned Israel into a major military power and put it on the map.

He was the author of the majority of the poetry in the Bible and was the architect of Solomon's temple.

Jesus was referred to as the Son of David 19 times in the Gospels, but what do people mainly know about David? Right, how he killed a giant.

It's an interesting twist of history that most dictionaries don't mention David, but they all seem to have Goliath and he was the loser.

At this point in his life David was working for his father tending the family's flock of sheep.

It was while he was at home that his father sent him to the front with a care package for his big brothers. When he arrived, he discovered Goliath taunting the Jewish army.

But understand, David wasn't just a part time musician with a side hustle of watching sheep.

If we go back to chapter 16, we discover that after Saul's disobedience, David was anointed by God's prophet, Samuel, to become the future king.

*1 Samuel 16:13, "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah."*

David had no doubt about who he was and what he had to do. So, as Christians, we, too, need to have the assurance of who we are.

John reminds us in John 1:12, *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."*

We are children of God, the Creator of all things, Master of the universe.

#### **Slide 4**

David knew that nothing less than total success would be acceptable. He knew that if he only wounded Goliath, it would just make him mad, and there's nothing worse than a mad giant.

1 Samuel 17:34-36, *“But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.”*

His goal was clear, his vision was certain, no ifs, ands, or buts. He was going to kill the big guy. He wasn’t afraid to commit himself to a line of action.

It’s been said that sometimes we’re too afraid of getting out on a limb. In fact, because of too little faith, we won’t even climb the tree. Well David was up the tree, out on the limb, and he didn’t care.

Too often we don’t set goals in our personal and spiritual lives because we’re afraid of how it’ll look if we don’t succeed. Then we don’t succeed anyway because there’s no accountability.

If you’re going to get anywhere in your life, you’d better know the direction you want to go before you head out, because, if you don’t know where you’re going, how will you know when you arrive?

David’s goal may have sounded a little extravagant, but he knew that it was all or nothing. It’s amazing that when you aim at nothing, nine times out of ten that’s what you hit, nothing.

I understand that every problem you encounter won’t necessarily be a giant. If your car won’t start or you’re involved in a minor fender bender that may not be a giant.

If you have the flu or a toothache that may not be a giant. If you think your boss is a jerk and your paycheck isn’t big enough it still may not be a giant.



Mark Twain said, *“A reasonable amount o’ fleas is good fer a dog— keeps him from broodin’ over bein’ a dog.”*

You might think that you can’t do it by yourself, and you’re probably right, but then again you don’t have to. David never expected that he could kill Goliath all by himself.

Listen to what David says, 1 Samuel 17:37, *“The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”* Basically, David was saying, *“Goliath might be big, but God is bigger.”*

Goliath mocked David for who he was, only a boy who wasn’t even a warrior. David responded by reminding the giant who God was.

1 Samuel 17:45-47, *“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 deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, 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.”*

David didn’t deny that he was small, or that he was young, instead he talked about how great his God was.

When we feel like we can’t do it or we are told we can’t do it, we need to be reminded of John’s words to the church in 1 John 4:4, *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”*

The result of the Spirit living in us is spelled out in Acts 1:8a, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;...”*

Whatever or whoever the giant is that you’re facing, you don’t have to face him alone.

David claimed God’s promises, but David did everything he could do as well. He didn’t just stand there and yell, *“God’s going to get you!”*

## **Slide 5**

### Conclusion

Let’s go back to the story...

1 Samuel 17:48-49, *“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.”*

One of the most important steps in overcoming the giants in our life is coming face to face with the fact that it is up to you.

We live in a society that has mastered the fine art of blaming others. If it’s not your parents’ fault, and it’s not society’s fault, then it must be God’s fault.

Therefore, if it’s somebody else’s fault that somebody ought to fix it.

The problem is that we go through life proclaiming that we’re “Adult Children of Alcoholics” or “Adult Children of Abusive Parents” or “Adult survivors of Abuse.”

My parents were great, the problem is I don’t get a support group, there’s no group for “Adult Children of Normal Parents.”

We're the wrong color, or the wrong gender, or the wrong religion, or our hair was too red, or we're too fat, or we didn't get the breaks that others got, and would somebody please do something about that giant that's breathing down my neck.

The giant wasn't David's responsibility. David was just a shepherd who was moonlighting as a delivery boy.

It wasn't David's fault that Goliath was there, but I wonder how the course of history would've been different for Israel if David hadn't done what he did.

What do you have to do to defeat your giant? I don't know, but I do know that God expects us to do our part so He can do His part.

Goliath wasn't the only giant to besiege David, nor was he the toughest, he was simply the most famous one.

How big are the giants in your life? They may not look very big to others but to you they are enormous. After all, little problems are what other people have, kind of like minor surgery.

Are your problems bigger than you can handle? Are they bigger than God can handle?

When I talk to people who're facing giants I try not to say, "*I know what you're going through,*" because I don't.

I don't know what you're going through, haven't got a clue, wouldn't know your giant if I fell over him in the dark.

But I do know this, you're going to have to stand up, look that sucker in the eye and tell yourself, "*If it's to be, it's up to me.*" Don't wait for a David to come along because you are "David!"

Now, having said that, I can't kill your giants for you, but I'm willing to be there with you.

I'll hold your hand, I'll pick you up, I'll let you lean on me, I'll buy you coffee, but you're going to have to kill that giant by yourself.