

“Give Me A Man” 1Samuel 17:10

Goliath’s had no idea what he was asking for when he bellowed like an out of tune tuba: “GIVE Me A MAN!”

Wayne Grudem and John Piper identified and addressed a problem in leadership back in 1991 which is still relevant:

“A controversy of major proportions has spread through the church. It began over 20 years ago in society at large. Sense then an avalanche of feminist literature has argued that there need be no difference between men’s and women’s, indeed, that to support gender-based role differences is unjust discrimination. Within evangelical Christianity, the counterpart to this movement has been the increasing tendency to oppose any unique leadership role for men in the home and the church” (John Piper and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*).

With this controversy over male leadership, some questions need to be answered:

What is Biblical manhood? What is masculinity? Who is a man? What is a man? When does a boy become a man? This last question is pertinent to our story in 1 Samuel 17 because it could be described as shepherd boy challenging a veteran soldier in combat.

1. A boy does not become a man necessarily at age 18 or 21. David in the story before us is a young teen acting manly.
2. A boy does not become a man when he reaches a certain physique. David was an underdeveloped youth. Saul was head and shoulders taller than everyone and he was no man in the biblical sense.
3. A boy does not become a man when he gets a title. Saul had the title “King” but he was not kingly.
4. A boy becomes a man when he begins to assert spiritual influence.

Whether Goliath knew it or not, he communicated through his speech the theme of 1 and 2 Samuel. This is a characteristic of narratives. In 1 Samuel 1:8, Elkanah spoke the theme of barrenness in his dialogue to Hannah in 1: 8. In the Ark of the Covenant Narrative (1 Samuel 4-7), the theme is announced in the first words in 4:3. Sometimes the author will use the narrative to prepare to hear the theme through the dialogue of a Bible character.

God sovereignly raises up leaders. In 1 and 2 Samuel, God raised up three leaders:

1. Samuel in chapters 1-7
2. Saul in chapters 8-15
3. David in chapters 16-2 Samuel

In chapter 17, two men confront the same test of leadership but only one shows true manhood.

1. Saul shows us What Leadership and Manhood is NOT in 17:1-11.

Israel and the Philistines have arrayed their armies for battle. Out comes the Philistine giant warrior. Chuck Swindol said that Goliath was like the cross eyed discus thrower. He did not set any records but he sure kept the fans awake.

Physical descriptions in Biblical narratives are rare. The reason for this lack of interest in person's image was clearly stated by the Lord to Samuel when he was about to choose the next king of Israel based on physical appearance in 16:7. When someone is physically portrayed like Goliath in a Biblical narrative, there is a significant reason. Goliath was 9 feet 9 inches tall. He would have dwarfed Shaquille O'Neal. Who on Israel's side was more like Goliath in height and should have fought him? King Saul who was "from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people" (1 Sam 9:2). This is the significant reason for these two rare physical descriptions.

But Saul had lost God's power (16:14) because of his sins recorded in 1 Samuel 13-15 and was too cowardly to fight Goliath.

Instead of fighting Goliath, Saul ran from his enemy and influenced all of his army to retreat in defeat (17:11).

Some men, even believers, spend their entire lives running from problems instead of confronting them. Things get rocky in the marriage and they run. The boss is not perfect at work and they run. There is a disagreement at church and they run.

2. David shows us What Leadership and Manhood Is in 17:12-52.

David faced the same problem but reacted manly. David had prepared ahead of time for this problem. David acts mans up. David the teenager models leadership.

A. Leaders cultivate a relationship with the Lord in private (17:11-30).

1. Before David faced a giant on the battlefield, he had been worshiping the Lord with his harp as he tended sheep. David got into the royal court because of his skill and reputation as a harpist (16:18; 17:15).

In 16:1-13, God anointed David to be the next king of His people. Here we see the sovereignty of God.

But in 16:14-23, David had diligently prepared himself spiritually for whatever God had for him. The sovereignty of God is balanced with the responsibility of man. God has chosen each of us to serve Him. He uses us when we diligently prepare for his service.

As he strummed on his harp he would write Psalms such as "the Lord is my shepherd." At night he composed, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handy work."

If we spent more time alone with God in prayer we would win more battles in public according to Ephesians 6:10-18. Paul informs us to put on the whole armor of God and then pray. Win the battle in private before you face the world and cave under the temptations.

How is your Quiet Time?

2. David had been faithful with small responsibilities.

Six times in chapters 16 and 17, David is described as a keeper of his father's sheep (16:11, 19; 17:15, 20, 28, 34). Now God is going to reward David for his faithfulness in little responsibilities. The narrator informs us in 17:20 that David "left the sheep with a keeper." David had faithfully kept his father's few, smelly sheep and now God was going to promote him to be the Shepherd of Israel (2 Samuel 7:8; Psalm 78:70-72). David "left" those sheep for the last time to become the Shepherd of God's flock. Are you faithful in what some might consider a small and unimportant ministry? David was and God increased his realm of influence.

I teach preachers, missionaries, youth pastors. Sometimes they turn in their papers late and I remind them that one day they will be preaching two or three times a week. They need to prepare faithfully now for that greater responsibility in the future. They will not be able to turn in their sermons late like some of them do with their papers. They will not be able to do a phone tree message to all the members that the sermon is not quite ready yet but it will be Monday morning.

3. David had God's perspective on problems.

In 17:25, Saul's soldiers reflect Saul's perspective. When they looked at Goliath they saw a human obstacle to great to overcome. They saw "this man that is come to defy Israel." By way of deliberate contrast, we hear David's first recorded words in 17:26 which reveal a totally different perspective than Saul and his soldiers. David did not see a man who was defying Israel, he saw an "uncircumcised Philistine" who was blaspheming "the armies of the living God." Where did David get this divine perspective on life? From his time alone with God and from faithfully serving God purely for His glory.

B. Leaders Confront Small Problems with God's Help (17:31-39).

David recounts how God helped him defeat a lion and a bear in protecting his father's sheep: "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

As you face your giant today, reflect back on God's answers to your prayers and how God has delivered you. Our God is still on the throne of the universe. Paul rejoiced in a specific instance when God delivered him. As he looked back on that rescue he wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:10 in praise to his Deliverer: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

C. Leaders Seek to Honor God with Their God Given Skills (17:40-52).

When David approached the giant, Goliath further ticked David off when he "cursed David by his gods." That was a mistake. Goliath's god was Dagon. We were introduced to Dagon in chapters 4-7, when the Philistines stole the ark of the covenant. In 5:1-4, the Philistine bring the ark of the covenant, which represented the God of Israel, and placed it before the national

Philistine deity, Dagon, as a defeated enemy would be thrown at his opposing enemy's feet. During the night, however, God body slams Dagon "upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord." The worshipers of Dagon set him back up on his pedestal and once again God body slams him "upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord." This is repeated twice for a reason which we will shortly see in David's battle with Goliath.

David charges at Goliath with a sling and five stones. David expressed his motive in combating Goliath in 17:44-47: God's honor. While Goliath focused on what he would do to David in his strength, David rehearsed what God was going to do through him. David would defeat God's enemy "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly (Israel) shall know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's."

That statement is fraught with Biblical theology. God had been predicting the monarchy (God leading through human rulers) since Genesis 17:6 when God informed Abraham that He would "make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you." Later we learn that this coming God ordained leadership would not only come from Abraham, a Jew, but more specifically, this leadership would descend from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8).

Even greater details were added in Deuteronomy 17:14-19. This leader was not to multiply horses or be a military leader. He was not to multiply wives or be a political leader. He was not to multiply gold or be a businessman. He was to be a man of God who "shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them."

The leader of God's people was not to be a military commander, politician, or a businessman but a man of the Word who would lead God's people to obey God's Law.

Why did David reject Saul's armor in 17:38-39? Because David knew as the newly anointed king from the tribe of Judah, his primary qualification was spiritual not physical or military.

David runs toward the Goliath in verse 48 in the name of the LORD. David fires one stone and mortally wounds Goliath who, like Dagon, falls "upon his face to the earth." Just as God defeated the national deity of the Philistines, He now defeats the national champion of the Philistines.

Who ultimately defeated God's uncircumcised enemy? God! Whom did God use to defeat His enemy? A man who was only about 13 years old but who was consumed with honoring his God with his God given skills.

Just as Saul influenced his men to run from their problems because he no longer loved God, David influence the same men to run to their problems because he was obsessed with exalting God. David was a man because of his spiritual influence.

You can be God's man on your particular battle field and influence others when you

1. Cultivate a relationship with God

2. Confront rather than run from your problems
3. Seek to honor God with your God given skills

Swindol told this story of the influence of a David like father on his son.

A friend of mine, who graduated from the same seminary I graduated from, has a bright red scar, a birthmark, across the side of his face. It's like a burn scar. It stretches in an unattractive, obvious fashion down his forehead and across his nose and down across a large section of his mouth and neck.

As far as I can tell, this man has absolutely no difficulty with inferiority. This is, to say the least, unusual.

One day I worked up the courage to ask him how it was that he could be so effective on his feet and trust God to use him without apparent concern about his looks.

"Because of my dad," he said. "My dad taught me, as far back as I can remember, that this part of my face was where an angel must have kissed me before I was ever born. He said to me, 'Son, this marking was for dad, so that I might know that you are mine. You have been marked out by God just to remind me that you're my son.'

"All through my young days, as I grew up, I was reminded by my dad, 'You are the most important, special fellow on earth.'

"To tell you the truth," he told me, "I got to where I felt sorry for people who *didn't* have birthmarks across the sides of their faces" (Charles R. Swindol. *Three Steps Forward Two Steps Back*. New York: Thomas Nelson, 1980, 134, 135).