

Equipped to take G-I-A-N-T steps

When I was a kid, I used to love having stories read to me at bedtime. My mum or dad would tell these stories in such an interesting way and it often seemed like I was right in the middle of the action! And if a story was true, then that was even better. God used stories to communicate truth, too, and one that describes an awesome historical event is recorded in 1 Samuel 17. It is the story of an encounter between a young shepherd boy, David, and a giant warrior, Goliath. In order to cover the main details of this story in a few words, we need to imitate Goliath and take G-I-A-N-T steps. Let's start walking...

STEP 1: Gauge the setting. 1 Samuel 17 describes events that occurred approximately 3,000 years ago. The Israelite and Philistine armies were camped on two opposite mountains and neither wanted to move from their high vantage points as this would be disadvantageous from a military point of view as their chariots and heavy armour weren't designed for fighting on mountain slopes. So, Goliath decided to break the stalemate by challenging someone to fight him in single combat (vs. 8-10).

STEP 2: Identify the problem. Saul, the Israelite king, viewed Goliath as a huge military threat and, consequently, he was terrified and conveyed this fear to his army. David, on the other hand, viewed Goliath as a theological problem, not a military one. He saw Goliath as one who was defying God, not just challenging the Israelite army. This wasn't merely a contest between physical armies but between opposing spiritual forces of truth and error. David correctly identified the problem which motivated him to take action. Similarly, those of us who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ need to recognize that we are in a spiritual battle - not against human beings, but against the devil and evil powers (Ephesians 6:10-13).

STEP 3: Acquire the resources. What resources did David use to fight Goliath?

- Resolve (v. 32).
- Expertise (vs. 34-36). David was a man of war, but he was also a man of worship. More than half of the book of Psalms - worship songs - was written by him. If we want to win in spiritual warfare, perhaps, like David, we need to spend more time worshipping so we get a clearer view of who God is and what his purposes are.
- Confidence in God (v. 37).
- Simplicity - five smooth stones, shepherd's bag, shepherd's staff, and sling (v. 40). When God is with someone, he can use simple, familiar resources to great effect.

Acquiring resources that work might mean getting rid of ones that don't (verse 39). There's a lesson for us here: if we want to have any chance of success in our battle against sinful tendencies in our lives, we can't rely on what might work for someone else. We have to be kitted out in the armour God provides for us.

STEP 4: Note the faith. David demonstrated faith in God by his talk and by his walk. By his words, he made it clear to Goliath that his faith is in God (vs. 45-47) and by his actions he reinforced what he said (vs. 47 and 51). David's faith in God was of enormous importance in his defeat of Goliath. How can such faith be any less important in our spiritual battles?

STEP 5: Take the challenge. It was David who lifted the stone and slung it at Goliath, killing him, yet the Israelite people as a whole benefited from what David did. Similarly, Jesus endured the cross and was victorious over evil. But that victory will benefit us only if we make it our own by coming to Jesus and admitting that we've fallen way below God's standard for living. Are you prepared to take the challenge of placing your trust in him for salvation and then go on to serve him wholeheartedly?