

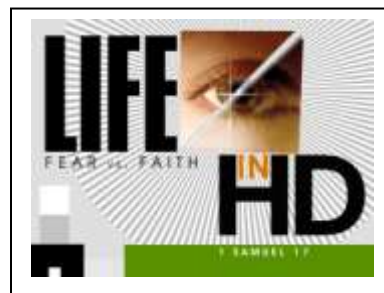
Fear vs. Faith

1 Samuel 17 . . . David, Saul, and Goliath

Soul vs. Spirit (Message 5)

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Perhaps the key verse in this entire series, "Life in HD . . . Soul versus Spirit", is

1 Thessalonians 5:23 . . .

*May God Himself, the God of peace,
sanctify you through and through.
May your whole spirit, soul and body be
kept blameless at the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ.¹*



It's this doctrine of the human being. What is it to be a person? Well, like God, we are a trinity. One person, and three parts. Spirit, soul, and body. **The spirit part of us**, that's the part that connects directly with God. God Himself is Spirit and to have a relationship with God necessarily means it will be a spiritual relationship. **Soul . . . that's our personality**. It too has three parts . . . mind, will, and emotions. **And body . . . it's just that**. Flesh and blood.

What I want you to see is the order of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 because that's as important as the three parts. Notice . . . spirit first, and then soul, and finally body. That's the hierarchy that God envisions. I love the way Watchman Nee put it . . .

Under normal conditions the spirit is like a mistress, the soul like a steward, and the body like a servant. The mistress commits matters to the steward who in turn commands the servant to carry them out . . . Unfortunately man has fallen; he has been defeated and has sinned; consequently the proper order of spirit, soul and body has been confused. (The Spiritual Man, pp. 43-44)

Think of it this way. Three people stand before you . . . facing you from left to right. On your far left is a person holding a sign which says simply "**SPIRIT.**" They are on the far left because they are in "first place." Moving to the right (as you would read across a page) is the second person. They hold a sign entitled "**SOUL.**" Remember, that's the mind, will, and emotions. This "second person" is in second place. Remember, they are the steward. They receive orders from the mistress or master. Finally, on your far right is the third person. Third person . . . third place. They hold a sign entitled "**BODY.**"

¹*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Th 5:23). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

The idea is simple and it mirrors exactly what we see in 1 Thess 5:23 . . . first is spirit. Second is soul. Third is body. The spirit (the master/mistress) tells the soul (the steward) what to do and, in turn, the soul (the steward), directs the body (the servant). To make the picture more complete envision a crown on the head of the mistress/master (the spirit) in order to grasp that they are truly in first place.

Now that's the way it is in God's order. But, remember, man has fallen and so, among other things, God's order has been confused. Here is what we more often see. Imagine that the soul moves to first place, the body to second, and the spirit to third. It is almost second nature in us for the soul to be in charge, wearing the crown. Intellect, will, or emotion being in charge of our lives.

If having the spirit in first place is living as a "spiritual man or woman" then having the soul in first place is to be "soulish." That creates problems. How many times have our unredeemed thoughts, our unbridled will, or our out of control emotions run the show and with predictable results?

Here is another aberration – one which is even more extreme. Envision the body moving into first place, the soul into second, and the spirit into third. When cultures or individuals begin to significantly degrade – this is what happens. Again, let's place the crown on the head of the body. We see that today, don't we? The mere lust of the flesh reigns in the lives of many people in our culture. For some of us, we have had days wherein that was how we lived. It gets ugly in a hurry. Why wouldn't it? Things are out of God's order.

Now here is the will of God for you and me in Christ . . . and it is the power of God to accomplish His Will in us . . .

23 May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.²

Amen to that. Let's pray.

READ 1 SAMUEL 17

The lives of Saul and David represent this battle between soul – perhaps I should say "un-submitted soul" – and spirit. You might call David "the spiritual man" and Saul "the soulish man."

And . . . it's right here in 1 Samuel 17 that we find one of the most common battles between soul and spirit. Let me give it to you in two short verses:

²*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Th 5:23). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. ³

And . . .

37 The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” ⁴



You guessed it . . . it's the conflict which rages – sometimes within ourselves – the conflict between fear and faith.

Like I've said all along – and so many of you have agreed with me – almost all of us have at least some Saul in us. And some David as well.

Here's what God Almighty wants you to hear today, deep down in your spirit, *“Fear not, for I am with you.”*

Let's look at the passage.

I. Goliath

Interesting archeological fact . . . the New Bible Dictionary tells us that skeletons have been found, in the region of Israel, which are roughly the same size as Goliath and which date to the time frame of 1 Samuel 17.

So . . . if you're tempted to read this story and dismiss it as a myth because we all know that giants don't exist then you have a problem. Not a religious problem, a scientific problem. Once again, archaeology confirms the Bible.

So, who was Goliath. He was part of race of giants that lived among the Philistines in their city of Gath. This group of people was known as the Anakites . . . which in ancient language means “long necked.” In other words, they were big. Really big.

The closest I can come to it in modern society is Shaquille O'Neal . . . check out this picture to give you a sense of how big O'Neal is. And . . . Goliath was two feet or more, taller than O'Neal. Goliath was a mountain of a man. And a brute. And a killer. Actually, a trained and experienced killer.



³*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁴*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:37). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

We've talked before about the spirit of intimidation and the spirit of fear. These are primary methods of Satan. I've tried to give you some sense of Goliath's size. Listen to his words:

8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle?"⁵

42 He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"⁶

Do you hear the hatred, accusation, and intimidation in his words. It's all about fear, isn't it?

By the way, did you notice that Goliath cursed David *"by his gods."* What were his gods?

1. Dagon, which we know little about.
2. Ashtoreth, which we know a great deal about. Ashtoreth was goddess worship of the most immoral kind. That's why we are to reject goddess worship in it's various forms today, but still we recognize that woman are created in the image of God every bit as much as men and they are co-equal before the Lord.
3. The third god of Goliath was Baalzebub. Maybe you remember the term. Jesus used it to describe Satan himself, "the prince of demons." Indeed. Goliath's god though he may not have realized it was the devil himself.

Here's a key point. Calvin reportedly said it many hundreds of years ago, *"we worship what we love, and we become like what we worship."* See the connection? Of course Goliath became nothing but a mountain of abuse, anger, hostility, accusation, and intimidation. That's what the devil is all about. Indeed, he became like his god.

In other words, deep down, Goliath had a spiritual problem. Just worth remembering if you're sincere about reaching those distant from God for Christ.

II. Saul

The key verse with regard to Saul is vs. 11.
We already looked at it . . .

⁵*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:8). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁶*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:42-44). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. 7

Here's the key thing about Saul. Fear got a hold of him. And . . . his fear was contagious. (Did you notice the order of the verses . . . Saul is mentioned first with regard to being "*dismayed and terrified.*" That's not accidental . . . when the leader is paralyzed by fear the people follow suit.

If you'll read through the life of Saul you'll notice that fear was an ongoing issue. Really it was a stronghold,.

- 1 Samuel 10:22 tells us that when Saul was about to be proclaimed as king he "*hid among the baggage.*" (Not a very auspicious start to your reign.)
- After the battle with the Amalekites and Saul's failure to put to death all the sheep and goats he told Samuel, *24 I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.8 (1 Samuel 15:24)*
- *12 Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had left Saul. 9 (1 Samuel 18:12)*
- *When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart.10 (1 Samuel 28:5)*



Moral of the story? Saul had an ongoing problem with fear in his life. You can add to vs. 11 the fact that Saul seemed to be trying to get someone else to fight Goliath when, if anyone should have gone out to take him on single combat, it should have been the king.

There's a moral here. It's one thing to be afraid. We are all afraid at one time or another. The question is where does the strength to face our fears – confront our own particular Goliath – come from?

⁷*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁸*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 15:24). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁹*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 18:12-13). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹⁰*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 28:5). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

What we know is that Saul couldn't seem to find that strength and so fear kept controlling him.

God wants to write a different story for our lives.

III. David

Now, if vs. 11 of 1 Samuel 17 is what defines Saul in this story, then vs. 37 is what defines David:

37 The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” 11

If Saul is defined by fear, David is defined by faith. Let's take a look at few more verses that speak to what's going on inside of David.

First of all, notice where the story starts. In the house of Jesse. Right about now you should be doing spiritual whiplash. "Wait a minute," you should be thinking to yourself, "I thought David was in the court of Saul playing the harp. That's where we left him at the end of chapter 16 last week."

That's right. He was there. But for some reason he returned home. I love what Matthew Henry says about this . . . David "know better than most do how to come down again after he had begun to rise, and strangely preferred the retirements of a pastoral life before all the pleasures and gaieties the court." Do you get that? After living in the splendor of the court David was just as happy to go home and tend the sheep. Why? David just loved the presence of God in his life . . . and he loved his family . . . and he loved his sheep. He was more than content with a simple life. What a great model.

So . . . when David shows up at the battlefield all he is, once more, is the little brother and a mere errand boy. And I want you to notice the accusation which is all around him.

- *28 When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle." 12*

¹¹*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:37). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹²*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:28). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

- *33 Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.”* ¹³
- *44 “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”* ¹⁴

In other words, David is dealing with the same stuff that everyone else is. But the guy is different . . . here’s the deal. Faith in God will make you different. Say that with me, “Faith in God will make me different.”

Yes it will.

There are three verses I want you to zero in on. Take the high-def view . . . get detailed. Pay attention. Let God’s Holy Spirit make it alive in you.

First of all, verse 32.

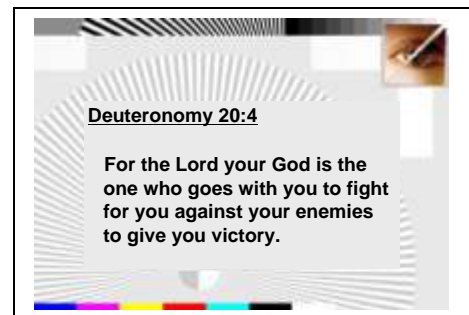
*32 David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine”*¹⁵

I have nothing other to say about that than this . . . some of you need to hear that deeply in your spirit today. Whatever your Goliath is . . . that thing which would try to inject fear into your life. God says to you, “Do not lose heart on account of that thing, that person, that set of circumstances.” Why?

4 For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.” ¹⁶ (Deu 20:4)

So, yes, you can take on your fears. Take on the devil. Take on life. Take on the issues. You can fight. But you have to do more than fight. You have to fight the right way. This brings me to the second verse:

38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head.



¹³*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:33). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹⁴*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:44). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹⁵*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹⁶*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Dt 20:4). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. “I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off.

40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.¹⁷

This one matters. David did not try and fight in Saul’s armor. He chose instead five smooth stones. They would have to be small stones in order to fit in his sling.

Do you see the contrast? Great and mighty armor (flashy, but heavy) and small stones. So . . . if you are going to take on the issues life, rather than run from them like Saul did, and instead run toward them like David did . . . use stones, not armor. Be unafraid of small, rather than big.

You see, my experience tells me that the small stones of God . . . humility, patience, gentleness, truth, prayer, etc . . . are far more powerful than Saul’s armor of defensive, anger, control, pride, etc. (Check out 1 Samuel 17 - David and Goliath). So . . . it isn’t just about slaying your Goliath but how you slay him. God’s way or in the flesh? Spirit or un-submitted soul? I’m thinking . . . the meek shall inherit the earth!

In just a few moments I’m going to give you five key stones with which to battle fear in your own life.

Finally, verse 45:

45 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 Almighty¹⁸

David actively, and publicly, put his trust in God. For David, it was about God and what God would do.

So . . . we’ve talked a bit about Goliath, Saul, and David. Let’s talk about God.

IV. God

I always like to look at passages and ask myself, “What’s the doctrine of God in this story?” Almost always, there are several of them. Here’s the key doctrine in 1 Samuel 17 . . . God delivers. Again, let’s remember our key verse:

¹⁷*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:38-40). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹⁸*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:45). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

37 The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” 19

Let me build the doctrine for you:

Psalm 18:6-7 says that God is a listening God . . . *From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.*

The Bible further in Psalm 18 says that **He is reaching God** . . . *“He reached down from on high and took hold of me.”* A **rescuing God** . . . *“He rescued me from my powerful enemy”* . . . and a **supporting God** . . . *“The Lord was my support”* and a **delivering God** . . . *“He bought me out into a spacious place.”*

By the way – David wrote those words . . . because he had first lived those words.

The Bible says that **God is a helping God** . . . *7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. (Ps 63:7)* . . . and **He is an upholding God** . . . *“Your right hand upholds me” (Ps 63:8).*

David wrote more about God in Psalm 138 . . . Did you know that **God is an answering God** . . . *On the day I called, you answered me (Ps 138:3)* . . .

He’s is a strengthening God (Ps 138:3) . . . **He is a regarding God** for *He regards the lowly (Ps 138:6)* . . . **He’s a steadfast God, an enduring God, an “I will not give up on you” God.**

He’s a near God for Paul the Apostle wrote in 2 Timothy 4:17-18 that the *“The Lord stood at my side”*.

V. You and Me

So how do you work this out in life . . . on your own battlefield when your own Goliath confronts you and when everything in you wants to be like Saul and run? When you want to hide. Get somebody else to do it.

Fear is common. Faith is what is extraordinary. In this soul-spirit battle in life it’s worth noting that this is the very first chapter that we see David and Saul side by side facing the very same situation. So . . . this is the first “in your face” moment wherein the difference between soul and spirit is being made crystal clear. What does this struggle look like in real life? How can you know that spirit is winning rather than un-submitted soul?

¹⁹*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 17:37). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Let's start where the Bible starts. Let's start with fear. Fear vs. faith. This is spirituality 101 when it comes to soul vs. spirit. Now we're getting real, right? Because who does not have this struggle – or hasn't had it at some point in life? As the Bible says, *“No temptation has overtaken you such that is common to man . . .”*

Yes, not my sister, not my brother, it's me oh Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

How do you and I become people of faith rather than people of ongoing fear or low level (but constant) anxiety?

Here's your punch list. It's simple.

1. BECOME SELF-AWARE

Check out this really dangerous prayer . . .

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.²⁰

Ask God to make you aware of the degree to which fear, or worry, or anxiety are part of your life.



2. RECOGNIZE THE BATTLE

On the battlefield David quickly grasped the nature of the warfare. It was spiritual. Everyone else was overawed by Goliath's size. David cut to the chase, stating that Goliath had defied the armies of the living God.

Let me give you a key verse . . . and key insight:

7 For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.²¹ (2 Timothy 1:7)

Fear is demonic . . . that is, apart from fear of God or the natural fear of "Gee, it wouldn't be good to jump off this cliff." This is what was going on with Saul . . . it's the demon that was tormenting him in 1 Samuel 16. Now we get its name. Fear.

So . . . does this make sense to you? If, at its root, fear is a spiritual problem then don't you think the solution will be a spiritual solution.

²⁰*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Ps 139:23). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

²¹*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (2 Ti 1:7). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Bingo. So . . . in response to fear here's God's answer:

3. PRAY

I have noticed something. It is impossible to be in true communion with God and be afraid at the same time. It's like oil and water, they don't mix. That's exactly what the Bible is saying in the following:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 22

Have you figured out that it takes no more time and energy to pray about the problem than just worry about it?

4. MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE

I know that's a dangerous word. I'm not talking Buddhism, I'm talking Bible. That is, read the Bible. But not superficial reading. Read it slowly. Take it in. Let it soak into your soul. Memorize it, reflect on it, sing it . . . and watch what happens inside of you . . .

*17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.23
(Romans 10:17)*

This isn't nearly as complicated as it sounds. The Bible is alive – powerful – infused with God's Presence. When you read it, really read it, really take it into you . . . it lives inside of you. And . . . it produces faith. This is where faith comes from . . . the Bible packed inside of you and living in you.

Amazing.

God is making you to be a David.

Now get this, because it matters. Do you see how the Bible is giving us a spiritual answer to a spiritual problem. Prayer, God's Presence, Scripture . . . these are the things that build up our spirit. They make us our strong in the center of our being. And the stronger we are in our spirit then the more we are able to fight and win the spiritual battle against fear.

²²*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Php 4:6-7). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

²³*The New King James Version.* 1996, c1982 (Ro 10:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

5. ACT

One of the stunning things in this story of David and Goliath is how the fear of the Israelites kept them from grasping their victory. Remember that Goliath's god was Baalzebub, Satan Himself. Their fear kept them immobilized. They thought Satan was too big for them. It took a little boy with a sling to show them what Moses and Joshua had demonstrated to an earlier generation . . . you can beat the devil. Even the smallest and weakest among you with simplest spiritual resources imaginable . . . can beat the devil. John the Apostle confirms it. *"Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4).

So this means, not only must you act in the face of fear in your life. You can act. You've got to do something about your fears.

Check out this verse:

And David drew near the Philistine. (1 Samuel 17:40)

So . . . think about the stuff which is your Goliath. Is it the problems that are so big that you want to ignore them and hope that they will just go away? Or is it just those abiding fears?

Here's the thing about God . . . take your small stones. Do your small things. Just start. And watch God go to work.

And here's another thing, as you act and as God works, it will be contagious. If the past story of your life is that the fear in you spread to others, then the new story in your life can be the faith in your empowering others. Read the rest of 1 Samuel 17 and you'll watch how David's faith became contagious

God is moving you out of fear. At least that is His will. It's a spiritual battle . . . soul vs. spirit. It will be won in your life as you dig deeper into God and allow Him to minister to you.

Today, you can take the first step in that journey. You can come to the altar. We can pray with you, counsel you, console you, and encourage you.

It's okay to be small. It's okay to be vulnerable. David was a boy. No one thought he had it in him. Guess what. What was in David can be in you. Faith. God can begin to build it up in you right now.

Amen.