



All Kids will Face a Goliath or Two

by [Janet Denison](#)

It's our "parental instinct" to jump in between angry giants and our kids. After all, isn't it our *job* to protect them from danger? That answer is yes, but only until they should begin learning to protect themselves. Most school teachers will tell you those lessons should come much sooner than you think. It is good to protect our kids, but it is even better to

help them learn to handle things themselves.

I just finished teaching [1 Samuel 17](#), the familiar story of David and Goliath. That's how we always title the passage, but David and the giant were not the only two people in that story. By the time David had arrived at the battlefield, thousands of men, three of them his brothers, had lived in fear of the giant for more than a month. What made David so confident and brave? Was David too young to understand the danger he was facing? Was David a miraculous example that we shouldn't expect anyone else to follow? Or, is that story in our Bibles to teach all of us how to handle our giants?

Jesse was David's father. He sent his youngest son to the battlefield with food and supplies for his brothers. Jesse had probably heard that things weren't going well in the fight, and he wanted news of his three oldest sons. Were they still alive? Were they hurt? Did they need anything? David was supposed to deliver the supplies and return with news of his brothers. Instead, David came home with a giant's head. I doubt Jesse realized what his youngest son was capable of accomplishing.

Parental lesson number one: We shouldn't measure our children's abilities based on what we have seen them do. Instead, we should consider all they are capable of accomplishing.

If Jesse had followed David to the battlefield, Goliath and the Philistines would probably have succeeded. What kind of dad would watch his teenage son head out to kill a heavily armored giant with only a slingshot in his hand! David's brothers had already tried to discourage him. His oldest brother was furious he was even there. David had refused to wear the king's armor because it was too cumbersome. The fighting men of Israel's army were all more likely to succeed. Jesse would *never* have allowed David to fight Goliath. But, David knew Goliath was his battle to fight.

Parental lesson number two: Parents rarely *choose* our children's battles. We won't be around for most of the confrontations our kids face. We tend to teach our children *not to fight*. We need to teach our kids how they can know *when to fight* and which weapons they should use.

The story of David and Goliath is a story of what God accomplished through David. But, we miss an important point if we think the story is only about miracles. Jesse had raised David to be a responsible, hardworking young man. David had been in the field, caring for the family's flock of sheep. David had been working in the palace, playing the lyre for King Saul. Jesse didn't send David to the shepherd's field without a slingshot and the training he needed to use it. The Bible says that David had already killed a lion and a bear. A slingshot was an important tool for protecting sheep from predators. David knew how to use that slingshot when he walked toward Goliath.

Parental lesson number three: We talk to our kids about the importance of education and hard work for their futures. But, the real equipping comes from the moments we require our kids to work hard now.

David wasn't on the battlefield only because Jesse had sent him there. David didn't encounter Goliath simply by chance. David knew how to handle a slingshot, but that isn't why he defeated Goliath. Samuel had already anointed David as the new king of Israel. God had directed Samuel to his choice, saying, "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). David was a "man after [God's] own heart" ([Acts 13:22](#)).

When David saw Goliath, he didn't see a giant of a man. He saw a man who was opposing his giant God. The teenager said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" ([1 Samuel 17:26](#)). David looked at King Saul and said, "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" ([1 Samuel 17:37](#)). The Bible says when Samuel anointed the new king, "from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on David" ([1 Samuel 16:13](#)). The reason David chose to battle Goliath and was equipped to defeat him was that his life and abilities were submitted to and inspired by God's Holy Spirit.

As parents, we want our children to be prepared for all the challenges that life might bring, but, if we are honest, we know we are incapable of that task. Our kids will face giants we can't predict or imagine. But if God is their Father, Jesus is their Lord, and the Holy Spirit is guiding their lives—then they are perfectly prepared and equipped to face those challenges. So . . .

Parental lesson number four: While it is important as a parent to make certain our children gain necessary skills, our *most important job* is to help our children learn how to seek the heart of God and receive his salvation through Christ. After that, we live as their example, teaching them to submit their lives to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

David was much younger than the other men on the battlefield. His weapons didn't seem powerful compared to the giant's. But, he was the strongest man out there. David was Spirit-led and called to the fight. Goliath didn't stand a chance. How will that well-known story help you parent your kids today?