

## THE FAITH OF DAVID

LESSON TWO - DECEMBER 10, 2023

PRINTED TEXT: SAMUEL 17:31-37, 45, 48-50

DEVOTIONAL READING: PSALM 27

*Key Verse: David said, "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." 1 Samuel 17:37a*

### King James Version

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. 33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: 35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. 37 David said moreover, 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. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee. 45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

### New Revised Standard Version

31 When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. 32 David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33 Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father, and whenever a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I

went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth, and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 David said, "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you!"

45 But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

48 When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David's hand.

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## INTRODUCTION

We all love heroes. In the movies, we follow our heroes and sing their praises. And the more daring their actions, the more we praise them. If you are like my crew, you have seen every Top Gun and Bad Boys movie more than once. In those movies the heroes put themselves in tough situations and came out with excellence every time. This is one of those lessons with a Bad Boys type hero, David.

In this lesson, watch how David got involved in the fight with Goliath. He was minding his own business. Then try to follow what enraged him and pushed him into action. Note also where his skills came from. Of course, you have heard the David and Goliath story so many times before. But there is a detail you missed. Consider this: David did not kill Goliath; God did. We know you heard differently so let us explain. Moses did not part the Red Sea. He did not take his hands and push back its water. He stretched out his rod in faith and God, in honoring that faith, parted the Red Sea.

The same here with David. Did David put the stone in the sling? Yes, he did. Did David twirl the sling to give it power? Yes, he did. But in honor of David's faith to face Goliath in the name of the living God, the Lord gave David's stone the direction and power it needed to kill Goliath. Where the stone struck Goliath was the only vulnerable point on Goliath's body which was open to David. That stone without doubt God directed to Goliath's head. After you have worked through the lesson, tell us if you agree.

## KEY TERMS

Risk Averse – Not open to taking risks; afraid of risks.

Menial – Tasks which are considered low-class or unskilled.

Kicker – Slang for an unexpected admission or remark.

Esoteric – Having a secret or hidden meaning; not obvious.

Dogmatic – Stating an opinion as if it were an obvious or widely accepted fact.

Infallibility – Something having perfection; without faults.



## TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

We open with an observation we noted in the first lesson, which we want you to keep in mind when dealing with Bible passages on faith. David did not set out to prove any theological points, show off his patriotism, or even defend his family honor. As he entered the story, David was doing what any teenager would do in Israel at that time. At his father's request, he was just running an errand and checking on his brothers. We cannot overemphasize this. The acts of faith we focus on in these lessons occurred in the normal activities of living, not to prove theological points or superiority of religion.

Notice also, faith must be based on something real and personal to the person showing the faith. This is the reason for verses 34-37. To miss this is to miss the whole lesson. Strong faith sits on deep personal convictions rooted in personal experiences. It is much more than mere expectation and stubbornness.

But also note the Philistines' insults to Israel and their God personally offended David (verse 36). At that time, to be uncircumcised was a sure sign that you were not in a relationship with the true God. That fact alone would have stirred fire in the bosom of any Hebrew male. Still, David's motivation ran higher than that. Read David's words to Goliath in verses 45-47. God's honor was on the line. Jehovah was either God, capable of defending Israel, or he was not God at all. David had no doubts, no if's, no but's, no maybes. For him God was God, so he could not lose. David did not have to look for a choir or praise team to pump him up. His own convictions about God set him ablaze.

In the bottom of verse 37 we see an interesting play of events: Saul displayed a fake (or weak) faith in God. We all know this scene. Saul is sending off David to fight the giant with a blessing, "and the Lord be with you." That sounded so good and pious. However, if Saul knew that the Lord was available to them, why was he and his army afraid to go forward and fight the Philistines? From verse 17 we see that the Philistines had been insulting Saul's army for forty days. Saul was displaying what we call "sideline faith." Our friends can show this wonderful "faith" when they are on the sidelines away from the real action. Like Saul they speak exciting words of faith from the safety of the sidelines or their living rooms.

From this text (verse 33) and related passages David was a youth. This may be significant. One of the features of youths is their willingness to take risks and their idealistic outlooks on life. Older persons with histories of failures, disappointments, and discouragements tend to be more risk averse. Our personal experience in the evangelism fields supports this. Youths are more ready to engage strangers even in districts we considered unsafe or violent. This in no way discounts the value of experience.

The last point in this section again refers to an issue raised before. God did not prepare David for his battle with Goliath on the day when he got to Israel's camp. The lion and bear experiences were all part of David's training. What is the lesson here? Simple! Do not despise the small menial tasks leaders may assign to you. Expert studies have shown that

over a third of the best administrators in both church and business affairs are people who came through the ranks from basement level. Faith is not an instant emotional bolt of courage. Often, we build courage experience by experience over a lengthy period.

## SANKOFA

In our text, Goliath was a tall, big human with an intimidating giant body. His opponent, David, was a youth enraged by the giant's insults and propelled by a firm trust in his God. Yet, in our world the giant may not be a single person, but a system of injustice. And the David character we often see is played by persons so enraged by injustice that they risk all (even life) to get a deadly stone into the system of injustice.

In the Caribbean country of Barbados stands a national statue dedicated to such a liberator named Bussa. From historical records, Bussa came from Africa to Barbados as a slave. To quote the website [totallybarbados.com](http://totallybarbados.com), "What is also known is that Bussa had the strength of character and a passion for enforcing change. It is this courage and sheer determination that observers captured in the history books (of Barbados). The man Barbadians fondly remember as 'Bussa' played an integral role in changing the social and political climate of the island forever."

Just as David's victory over Goliath changed the course of history for Israel, the Bussa-led rebellions changed the course of history for Barbados and the other slave colonies in the Caribbean in the 19th century. Like David, faith fueled by rage drove Bussa. They both knew evil was wrong and they had to stop the evil. Faith is not an eloquent recital of Hebrews 11:1. It is a rage that burns in our gut and shouts, "This is wrong, and I must do something to stop it, even if it costs me all my money, my freedom, or my life."

## CASE STUDY

Faith is one of those topics we can talk about for a week without understanding what it really is and how it works. Certainly, we are not saying an academic study of faith is necessary. But a basic knowledge of faith and how it works equips us to better recognize and to act in faith.

In a Psychology Today website post (September 28, 2012) Arthur Dobrin, D.S.W. (professor emeritus at Hofstra University) addressed this issue under the title "Why Faith Is Important." Here is the key plank of the professor's article. "Faith is an expression of hope for something better. More than a wish, it is closer to a belief, but not quite. A belief is rooted in the mind. Faith is based in the heart." For me, here is the kicker: "We act in faith when there is no guarantee, no certainty. No one knows what kind of life an infant will have, yet people continue to have children. No one can know how life with our mates will turn out, yet we continue to have faith our relationships will last a lifetime." And check this: "Faith speaks the language of the heart. It is an expression of hope that goes beyond the conscious mind."



All this clearly shows we cannot just turn on faith as we do electricity with a power switch. Faith develops over time after we have formed a deep personal conviction about the person or thing which is at the center of our faith. We have faith our car will start when we turn the key or press the ignition, because in the past that process started the car. Our friends' cars also start that way. So, what about faith in God? How could David have known God would have delivered Goliath into his hands? God had rescued David before. Further, the historical records, the scriptures, the folklore, the authorities he respected, all declared God's faithfulness to Israel.

This brings us to a very real and present danger Christian's face today. Unwittingly and unwisely Christians without proper preparation enter esoteric discussions on the Bible, its infallibility, its accuracy, and its relevance. Sharing in such debates can make a Christian appear so wise, so rational, and non-dogmatic. But there is a grave danger!

Consider that the opponents of Christianity are not seeking to win the arguments. Oh no! What they seek is to raise doubts in our minds about our faith. Do you remember the serpent and Eve's conversation in Genesis: "Did God really say...?" The whole aim of this intellectual sparring is to weaken the foundation of our faith, the Bible. A good example of such an issue is the debate which questions why we celebrate Christmas since the Bible gives no mandate for such a celebration.

As with any building, the structure falls when the foundation falls. Therefore, we must learn to feed our faith, and be careful, very careful, about joining in any activity which seeks to shake the foundational planks of our faith. So be cautious when debating the Bible with fools (Psalm 14:1).

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## LIFE APPLICATION

At the base of faith is a solid trust in the almighty God. Against this truth, take time to reflect on your personal understanding of God and his capabilities. Try, difficult as it might be, to step past the popular cliches, and quiz yourself on the events in your experiences that confirm God is who you said he is. Note in the lead up to the fight with Goliath, David drew not on rhetoric, but on his past experiences where God had showed up for him. What past experiences can you draw on when dire threats come?

Consider professor Arthur Dobrin's position in the Case Study: in situations requiring faith, outcomes are without guarantees. Is this consistent with your understanding of Bible passages on faith? Look at three cases. With Samson, he died giving Israel one of its greatest deliverance events. With the three Hebrew boys (Daniel 3), in faith they faced the possibility that God might not save them (Daniel 3:16-18). In Acts 6 and 7 we see Stephen full of faith standing for God and being stoned to death. In light of these incidents, what is your position on the statement, "When we stand for justice and or righteousness, we stand despite the risks of personal injury, loss of property, loss of freedom, and/or loss of life"?

## LIFE APPLICATION

*Is it worthwhile to take a faith stance for God when the outcomes are not guaranteed?*

In the lesson we mentioned “sideline faith”: speaking words of faith when we are not directly involved in the actual fight. What role, if any, can this play in the lives of believers? Can we spur others on to acts of faith by our support and encouragement to them? Can you give examples of where “sideline faith” helped in an act of faith? Please do not give any scenes from the movie Rocky. We overuse those scenes.

### Questions

1. When acting in faith, outcomes are without guarantees. Do you accept that statement?
2. Is there any difference between faith and a positive mental attitude to life? Do optimists have more faith than pessimists?
3. Does internal rage play a role in a Christian’s expression of faith? (In the Sankofa, Bussa was not known to be a Christian in our clinical sense of the word.)



## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Closing Prayer: Dear God, as I walk through this life, I see giants in various forms and situations. Help me to remain focused on you and firm in my faith that you, who delivered David and delivered Israel repeatedly in the past, will also deliver me today. This is my prayer request, in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

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### Daily Bible Readings for the Upcoming Lesson

Dec. 11	M	Genesis 38:6-11, 13-18, 24-26	Tamar’s Risk-taking Faith
Dec. 12	T	Joshua 2:1-6, 8-16	Rahab’s Faith
Dec. 13	W	James 5:1-11	Patient Faith
Dec. 14	Th	1 Timothy 1:12-17	God’s Grave Overflowed
Dec. 15	F	2 Samuel 11:1-5, 26-12:1, 4-7a, 15-16, 24	Bathsheba’s Challenged Faith
Dec. 16	Sa	Psalms 9:1-14	God, the Stronghold for the Oppressed
Dec. 17	Su	Matthew 1:1-17	A Family Tree Characterized by Faith