

## ***Session 7 Spirit of Might: The Beauty of Courage***

### **INTRODUCTION**

We're going to look again verse by verse at 1 Samuel 17, because the focus of this course is discovering the beauty of the Lord through the experience and the eyes of David. We'll reference a bit of the story and then go to where David reveals what God has shown him through the book of Psalms. We're calling this, "The Spirit of Might: The Beauty of Divine Courage," and what David is empowered to see is a little different than what we saw last session, where David looked up at creation and saw the beauty of God.

There's a magnificent script, if you will. There's a magnificent blueprint. There's a plan from which God the Father has been operating from since before Genesis 1, from the beginning of human history. David is allowed to see this divine script; he's allowed to peer into the blueprint from which God is orchestrating human history. When David sees this wisdom, the majesty of the wisdom, the certainty of where God is taking His people, one of the outcomes of that spirit of revelation was the spirit of might. We call it in the New Testament "the spirit of faith." It's when might grabs hold of our heart. It's an operation of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of might typically is related to understanding in revelation. Sometimes it seems to come out of nowhere, and of course we know it's the person of the Holy Spirit, but our heart is energized and gripped with a divine confidence, the spirit of might. It's something that comes upon us, but more often than not, that spirit of might is related to a surge of understanding that enters our hearts. Again, that's a gift of the Holy Spirit. It's called the spirit of revelation. That spirit of understanding takes hold of our heart and we feel like we could stand before any great giant. That's what's happening in David's experience right here. A spirit of might is laying hold of him. He sees something about the plan of God. He has this courage; he has this unwavering heart that the Word of God declares as beautiful before the Lord: that tranquility, that uniqueness of a single heart that doesn't waver before challenge or before threatening obstacles. It stands strong in the confidence of the Lord. That's a facet of the beauty of God that Jesus obviously operated in. John the Baptist operated in it as well, and David in a secondary way is operating in it here in 1 Samuel 17.

### **WITHOUT A CHALLENGE, WITHOUT A BATTLE, THERE CAN BE NO VICTORY**

Tonight we're going to look a little on the national crisis that suddenly erupted before the leaders of Israel, and how God introduces a young shepherd into the national life of Israel by this crisis. Of course we understand that often God will allow a crisis to be the circumstances by which He introduces new dimensions of your experience in the Lord. You've heard it said before that without a challenge, without a battle, there can't be a victory. The definition of a victory comes out of defeating the obstacle that appears before us. What happens typically is that the obstacle appears before us and our hearts collapse under the weight of fear before the obstacle. When the Lord allows us to see where things are going, we can see the big picture of God's hand and where He's taking our own individual lives as well as the people of God. Then the spirit of might takes hold of our heart. We can stand before obstacles looking at God, rather than human provision, as our source.

### **ISRAEL BATTLES THE PHILISTINES FOR THE DESTINY OF THEIR NATION AND PEOPLE**

1 Samuel 17 is a very familiar story. It's a story that's a favorite in children's church, but this is far more than just a nice story; it was an actual fact in history. There was a national crisis that suddenly broke into the life of Israel. The Philistines, the most formidable enemy of Israel at that time, had a decided advantage because they had discovered iron just before the Israelites did. At this very time in Israel's history, the Philistines had iron

and Israel had none. They had only just begun to discover the ability to make iron. The Philistines had swords, and therefore they had a tremendous advantage in battle.

The Philistines have gathered on one side of the mountain. It says in 1 Samuel 17:1, “The Philistines had gathered their armies together to battle.” We learn from 1 Samuel 17:2 that they were gathering on each side of the Valley of Elah. The army of Israel “drew up in battle array against the Philistines” (v. 2). You can just picture it: The Philistines have a larger army and they have iron weapons. Remember that depending on the outcome of this battle, if the Philistines defeat Israel, which it looks like they will, they will kill all the men. The outcome will not be peaceful. They’ll go in and slaughter all the men who are warriors. They will rape the women and enslave the children. This is a full-scale national crisis, because their king is now demonized, and these fits of demonic rage come upon Saul that drive him to the brink of insanity. He’s moving in and out of insanity. The Spirit of the Lord has left their king. He doesn’t have the power or courage to stand, nor does he have the power to instill or inspire courage in those around him. The nation is without protection in some ways.

### **THEN ALONG CAME A GIANT**

So the Philistines are standing on one side of the mountain, Israel on the other, with a great valley between them (1 Sam. 17:3). Suddenly, the champion appears from the camp of the Philistines (v. 4). His name is Goliath. “[His height was six cubits and a span” (v. 4). He was approximately 9’9”—just under ten feet in height. He was the mighty champion of the army of the Philistines. He appeared unstoppable, and by human agency he was unstoppable. “He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail”—metal. “The weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze” (v. 5)—120 pounds. He had an iron helmet and a 120-pound vest on to protect him from a sword or a spear of some sort, which of course would be inferior to their swords. “He had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders” (v. 7). “Now the shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels”—or fifteen pounds. The weight of the head of the spear was fifteen pounds. This man was literally a giant.

### **GOLIATH STOOD IN THE SPIRIT OF ACCUSATION AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

He stood in the spirit of accusation, like the enemy always does. He cried out against them relentlessly day and night for forty days and forty nights. He came and cried out against Israel in the spirit of accusation. Unrelenting accusation is the enemy’s tactic, the enemy’s strategy to break down and undermine the spirit of courage, the spirit of might. “He stood and cried out against the armies of Israel, and said to them, ‘Why have you come out to line up for battle?’” (1 Sam. 17:8). In other words, “You’re hopeless. You know you’re going to lose!” How common is that spirit of accusation, that spirit of despair, that hopeless spirit. We say, “Why is it even worth the hassle? I know that I’ll never break through.”

### **THE CORPORATE DIMENSIONS OF THIS FIERCE, FEARFUL CONFLICT**

Let’s back up a little. This great national crisis had two primary applications. I should have introduced it with this point. The first application speaks of the corporate battle between the people of God and the enemies of God. Will the Church be snuffed out and dwindle down to nothing as the gates of hell prevail, or will the Church in fact prevail against the authority of hell? There’s a corporate dimension to this great drama, this great conflict. It’s acted out in real life-and-blood issues in the life of David. This isn’t just a story, this is real. It’s real fear, real tears, real faith, real risk; the whole thing is real. The application is first corporate, involving all the people of God. Will we in fact be defeated, or will we defeat the enemies of God?

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**THE BEAUTY AND THE POWER WE POSSESS IN THE VICTORY OF THE SON OF GOD**

The second application is individual. The enemies aren't the Antichrist's kingdom, the governments, the political powers standing against the Church, martyrdom, and all the things that will come to a full head at the end of the age; and, by the way, martyrdom right now in 1998 is at an all-time high in church history. There are more martyrs right now than any other time in church history. Some people say very naively that martyrdom is going to break out again. Beloved, it's already at record heights right now across the world. It's not something that's going to break out; it has already broken out. It will touch the Western world before it's over. That will be the glory of the Church, because the power of might, the spirit of might, this courage that beautifies our lives and makes us look so different from the common, mere man—for we are no longer mere men, as Paul the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 3:3; we're people with an identity rooted in the uncreated God who became man, Christ Jesus. We are not mere men. We're people with a spiritual identity that identifies us with the beauty and the power in the victory of the Son of God.

The first application is corporate and the second application is individual. We feel the hopelessness; we feel the spirit of despair at both levels. We look at the Church and say, "Will revival ever come?" There are many applications from literal governments just because of the power of darkness working in amongst the Church. Will they defeat the Church or will we in fact be victorious? Then there's the individual application as we battle lust, fear, bitterness, spiritual boredom, and spiritual barrenness. Will we ever have the spirit of prayer? Will we ever love the Word of God? Will we ever be able to hear God's voice? Will we ever rise up in victory to where we feel love for God in our hearts? Those are the great giants that stand before us individually. Then, of course, before us corporately, will the Church always be like this?

**THE ACCUSATIONS OF THE ENEMY WILL PUMMEL US RELENTLESSLY**

I believe that 1 Samuel 17 is a dramatization, a real, but very dramatic dramatization, depicting the struggle and the principles of victory before us in the life of this young warrior king, this young worshiping warrior, David. We see in 1 Samuel 17:8 and 16 that Goliath came out for forty days and forty nights, morning and night. Relentlessly, the spirit of accusation comes. Here's what the spirit of accusation says: "Why have you come out to line up for battle?" In other words, "It's not even worth the effort. You might as well just accept the fact that your heart is dull and cold. You don't move in the love of God. You're different. You'll never be a woman of prayer. You'll never be a man that's successful in the things of God. Why bother to line up in battle array? Why bother with intercessory prayer? Why do warfare through worship? Why study the Word of God and believe for a great reformation and revival that explodes across the land?" Beloved, that's the spirit of the enemy. It's an age-old tactic of Satan's kingdom. He comes and whispers unrelentingly in our ear. Goliath came out for forty days and forty nights (1 Sam. 17:16). It never stops.

And again we're not covering every point and principle, because that's not the approach we're taking in this course, but only inasmuch it will bring us to the discovery of the beauty of the Lord through David's experience. Here's the deal, though: Goliath said, in essence, "If your champion is able to beat me, then we will serve you, but if I prevail against him, then you serve us" (1 Sam. 17:9, paraphrased). Satan breathes like a dragon roaring, breathing fire down the neck of the Church. "If I defeat you, if I can take out your champions, then I have you all."

We say, "No. Our champion is the Lord Jesus. You couldn't take Him out. He has already prevailed and the gates of hell will not prevail against us."

Then in 1 Samuel 17:10, it goes from despair to defiance. “I will defy the people of God this very day” (paraphrased). That’s what accusation declares to the Body of Christ. He goes from hopelessness in 1 Samuel 17:8 to blatant in-your-face defiance. Hopelessness becomes utter defiance. Our hearts tremble with fear.

**BELIEVE FOR THINGS DIFFERENTLY, LIVE DIFFERENTLY, AND DON’T YIELD TO FEAR**

“All Israel heard the words of the Philistine.” Look at the impact: “They were dismayed and greatly afraid” (v. 11). Right now the Church of Jesus Christ across the Western world is dismayed and greatly afraid. Now the Church doesn’t feel like it’s greatly afraid, because we’re so far entrenched in the comfort zone that we have nothing to fear. We’ve drawn the battle lines out there against the enemy. We’re so in the comfort zone, there’s so little risk that we’re taking, that we don’t see the fear. When the Spirit of the Lord begins to put His hand upon a congregation, upon a group of people, and says, “Lift your voice; blow the trumpet; take a stand; live in a radically different way,” you go to the edge, and all of a sudden even the people of God rise up and say you’re going too far. All of a sudden, the issue of fear and dismay becomes a real issue. As long as you’re fast asleep in the comfort zone, you don’t feel the dismay and the fear. You’re a people who want to go the full distance. Every now and then we go out there a little further than that which we’re accustomed to and comfortable with, and we feel the fear. Then sometimes we’ll back away until things settle down again. The Lord says, “Lift your voice; take a stand. Live differently; be differently. Believe for things differently and allow the scoffers to scoff and don’t yield to fear.”

**WHEN THE SCOFFERS SCOFF, OUR UNCERTAINTY BECOMES MANIFEST**

Beloved, if you take a stand, the scoffers in and outside the Church will scoff. When the scoffers scoff, our uncertainty becomes manifest. Lots of times something will happen and someone will lift their voice and the people will gather. It’s like everyone is living off of the adrenaline and the excitement of the other. Then the scoffer’s voice, the voice of Goliath, the voice of the enemy is heard, and everyone scatters. The Lord is looking for a few good men and women who will take a stand, who will say, “Our inheritance isn’t mainly on the earth, only secondarily. Our inheritance is somewhere else.” Let the scoffers scoff, believers or unbelievers. We’re going the whole distance, as the New Testament describes.

**DAVID WAS AN ALIEN AND A STRANGER TO HIS FAMILY ON ACCOUNT OF HIS ZEAL**

The accusations are relentless, day and night (1 Sam. 17:16). It reminds you of Revelation 12:10: How often does Satan accuse? Night and day, night and day he whispers. Uncertainty destroys our resolve to move on in partnership, in mature bridal partnership with the Son of God. Uncertainty destroys our resolve to have bridal partnership. “Well, what will my friends and family say? What will the people say? What I’m doing right now looks a little strange. I don’t have the same values they have, and they claim Christ as well.”

We’ll undoubtedly get to Psalm 69 at some point; it’s one of my favorite Psalms, because it involves both David’s inner resolve and his personal life before God. He says, “Zeal for Your house has consumed me,” but then he adds, “That zeal has made me an alien and a stranger to my family and friends” (Ps. 69:7-8, paraphrased). “I look like a stranger to them; they don’t even recognize me because the zeal of God has laid hold of me.” They looked at David and wagged their heads. They said, “You are over the edge.”

But David said, “Zeal for God has laid hold of me.” David knows what it means to have resolve birthed in him, rooted and grounded in the spirit of might. That really is rooted and grounded in the spirit of revelation when we looked at in our last sessions.

**“ISRAEL AND THE PHILISTINES HAD DRAWN UP IN BATTLE ARRAY”**

“For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army” (1 Sam. 17:21). There it is. The conflict is breaking out in our nation right now. David hears it (v. 23). As a young man, bringing some supplies up, he listens. I trust you’ll read the chapter in fullness and the assignment in the A.W. Pink book. David is coming up and he overhears the talk of the soldiers. He says, “What’s going on here?” He’s been gazing on the beauty of the Lord in creation; he hasn’t really confronted any military situations. He says, “I don’t understand what’s happening right now. Why is everyone so afraid right now? Is it not God who spoke?”

**“ALL THE MEN OF ISRAEL...FLED FROM HIM AND WERE DREADFULLY AFRAID”**

“And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid” (1 Sam. 17:24). In verse 11 they were greatly afraid, and now in verse 24, they’re dreadfully afraid. They fled. I remember when we were going through some introductory troubles, when people were rising up against us everywhere. I say “introductory,” because in the big picture the Lord looks back and says, “That was grade school. I was teaching you addition and subtraction. That wasn’t algebra II or calculus. You had a few people on the radio in a few places say you were liars, off the wall, and stupid.”

Not a lot of people, but a number of those in our church said, “It’s too wearisome. I can’t come to a church and deal with this.”

**THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS IMPARTED TO A FEW, AND IT’S CONTAGIOUS**

But beloved, check out the end of the age. Look at where this thing is going. The Lord is saying, “I’m just whispering right now. I’m giving you a little pop quiz to help you take a stand.” I’m not trying to be mean about that, but what I’m trying to say is that those introductory shakings, those little rumblings, are nothing. God wants the people of God not to flee, but to stand strong in the spirit of might. Typically, the rule of the day is that God raises up a few men and a few women who have the spirit of might on them, and it’s contagious. It’s imparted to others. The spirit of might is something that we have directly in our life with God, but it’s something that in a secondary way is imparted to others. It’s like a crutch that helps them over the troubled times until they can get hold of God themselves. The spirit of might is contagious.

The men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man? Get a grip. Have you seen the facts?” (1 Sam. 17:25, paraphrased). “Immorality is at an all-time high. The Church is backsliding everywhere. No one is taking a stand in prayer. The prophetic isn’t worth the price that it costs to take a stand for. Have you seen the power that Satan has as the enemies of God begin to increase in their manifest power? Surely he has come to defy Israel.” Beloved, when that arrow strikes your heart, surely we will lose you. Take it out and throw it down. Put your heart before that flame of fire called the Word of God so that that fire can melt the coldness of our hearts, the natural coldness of our hearts.

**“WHO IS THIS MAN, THIS MAN OUT OF COVENANT, THAT HE SHOULD DEFY US?”**

David spoke to the men. He said, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Sam. 17:26). He is a man out of covenant with God. David is saying, “Who is this man that has no relationship to God, talking to the people of God? We’re in covenant and he’s not in covenant; what’s the point?” Maybe it’s within the Body of Christ. There are people who are in covenant with God, but they don’t have the Word of the Lord burning in their hearts. We don’t have to live by their intimidations. If we have the

Word of the Lord, beloved, we can stand in might. David says, “Who is this man anyway, this man out of covenant, that he should defy us?”

“And the people answered him in this manner, saying, ‘So shall it be done for the man who kills him’” (1 Sam. 17:27).

### **THE JEALOUSY AND PROVOCATION OF THE OLDEST BORN AGAINST HIS BROTHER**

Remember, back in 1 Samuel 16 we first met Eliab, the older brother of David. Samuel initially wanted to pour the oil on him. Yet Eliab had a problem with his little brother David, the eighth down the line. Eliab said, “You took my spot, little man. You really think you’re something special, don’t you?” He accuses him. Eliab’s anger rose and he accused David of pride. He said, “David, you don’t have anything happening in God. You’re just filled with pride.” Though it’s often true that the anointed of the Lord have elements of pride in their life, one of the tried and proven arguments to undermine the anointing of the Lord is the old pride argument, because the truly sincere will have paralysis by analysis. They’ll be so preoccupied by their seeking to be right that the very analysis will paralyze them. There’s a place where we know we’ve heard from God and we take a stand. They’ll rail us from every corner, the scoffers from within and without the community of God, and we take our stand. I’m not saying we don’t have a teachable spirit. We can misappropriate this and find ourselves in big trouble.

### **THE COMING CULMINATION OF THE MOST DRAMATIC HOUR IN ALL HUMAN HISTORY**

David says, “What have I done now? Is there not a cause?” (1 Sam. 17:29). What a statement. There was a book written some years ago from this verse called, *Is There Not a Cause?* Beloved, let me ask you a question: Is there not a cause to get up out of our beds and give ourselves to God in an extraordinary way? Is there not a cause at the end of the age? Is there not a cause that’s worthy of extraordinary lifestyles before God? We live as though this is going to be just like it was 100 years ago. I believe with all of my heart we’re at the beginning of the generation that will culminate in the most dramatic hour of human history. Think about the power demonstrated in Genesis 1. God will have the same zeal at the end of human history as He had at the beginning of human history. The application will be different, but the zeal of the Lord of hosts at the end of natural history will equal the power He operated in at the beginning of natural history. You read the book of Revelation and you’ll see that this thing culminates with the sky filled with flaming fire and the sun not working. The power that created the sun will stop the sun. The Genesis 1 power will be on display in a different application at both ends of natural history.

### **IS THERE NOT A CAUSE TO STAND AND FIGHT IN THIS GENERATION?**

I talk to people sometimes, and they make this remark about the miracles. One of my favorite things to do when I’m at conferences is to say, “The miracles done with Moses in Exodus and the miracles done with the apostles in Acts were very, very different in nature.” I don’t want to go off on that, but I say, “Exodus and Acts combined and multiplied on a global dimension is what will happen in the end-time Church.” Exodus and Acts combined and multiplied! And there are many dimensions to each one of those different types of miracles. They’re very, very different in nature.

But I’ve had all kinds of men of God in the Body of Christ say, “That’s ridiculous.”

I say, “When you have Genesis 1 on your résumé, then the book of Exodus is nothing. If you’re the God who did Genesis 1, then the book of Acts is a whisper. It’s a picture of restraining power, in fact, if you can do Genesis 1. The book of Acts is nothing to God, nothing.”

Is there not a cause? I challenge you tonight: Is there not a cause? Is there not something worth being different about in this generation? I say there is. Of course you believe it as well or you wouldn't be sitting in this room.

**“LET NO MAN’S HEART FAIL BECAUSE OF HIM”**

David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him” (1 Sam. 17:32). I love the spirit of faith, this apostolic courage, the spirit of might. He said, “I understand you having a little fear, but not because of him. He’s not even in covenant with God. He doesn’t have the Word of God. If you’re going to be fearful, that’s one thing, but not because of Goliath, not because of his words. They have no power.” Because God won’t back up Goliath. Goliath’s words have no power because God won’t back them up. When the enemy rails against us, he has no power, because God won’t back up the enemy. He has power a little to test and train the Body of Christ. The power that God has allowed the enemy to operate in is for one purpose: to train the Body of Christ in reigning and ruling in the power of God. That’s why the enemy has a little power. Saul has no Holy Spirit on him. He can’t recognize the Spirit of God on this young man. Leaders without anointing can’t recognize the anointing when it begins to emerge and break forth.

**“FROM CAIRO TO CAPETOWN, ALL I SEE IS A BLOOD-WASHED AFRICA”**

I don’t want to get really heavy into that, because I don’t want us to fuel a critical spirit. But I remember hearing Reinhard Bonnke preach on 1 Samuel 17 once. Reinhard Bonnke is the great evangelist from Germany. The reason I say *great* isn’t because he speaks to a million people at a time, which he does; I say *great* because I’ve had the chance to be with him a number of times. He’s a man of abandonment to God. I’m using the word *great* to describe his character, not his influence. He’s a great man. Reinhard Bonnke has no energy for anything. I remember one time being able to be on a trip with him. We went to bed at 1:00 in the morning and we got up for a plane flight. I had to catch it at 7:00 so we were there at 6:00, and I was whipped. I was totally exhausted. I sat across the table talking to him and his wife, Anne. I said, “Well, Reinhard, what do you do in this and that and the other?”

I can see him right now. Now, don’t be condemned by this; just let this man flow in the way God made him. He said, “I have no time and no energy for any of those things. All I see is a blood-washed Africa. From Cairo to Capetown I see nothing, none of these other things. A blood-washed Africa is all I see. It’s all I live for.”

So here I am. I have a little energy and I’m taking a step back. It’s 6:00 in the morning. We’ve been in bed a few hours and I had only two cups of coffee. I look at his wife. I said, “Wow.”

She said, “My dear Reinhard is always like this.”

I looked at him and said, “I’ve met my match and am defeated soundly.” I said, “Really Reinhard, you need to relax.”

He said, “I have a vision.”

I said, “OK, OK, let’s not go there again.” No, it was awesome. It was awesome.

### **EX-ANOINTED, UNANOINTED, AND ANTI-ANOINTED PROFESSIONALS**

How did I get onto Reinhard Bonnke? What verse am I in? Oh yes, he was talking about 1 Samuel 17. He said, "There are four groups in 1 Samuel 17." I loved it! He said, "Number one: there's the ex-anointed professional, Saul; the ex-anointed professional."

I said, "Yes, that's right. The ex-anointed professional—that's Saul."

Number two: There are the unanointed professionals. That's the army of Israel, Saul's boys, unanointed professionals. They just follow him around, dressing like he does; whatever hairstyle he has, they have. They mimic everything he does. They're unanointed professionals. They were the cabinet of Saul.

Then there's the anti-anointed; that's Goliath, really powerful, but on the wrong side. And lastly there's the anointed unprofessional, David, young David, the anointed unprofessional. Reinhard Bonnke said, "When the anointed unprofessional goes against the anti-anointed professional, the ex-anointed, and the unanointed professionals always resist him. Always they rise up to resist him." He says, "The professionals will always rise up to stand against the young Davids when they take a stand against the anti-anointed; just get used to it." He was talking to a whole group of pastors. Here Saul was, this, ex-anointed professional, saying, "You are not able to stand," and Saul gave a bunch of reasons why God couldn't work on his behalf. Beloved, that's the ex-anointed professional at his best: giving a list of reasons why it can't work for him to believe God.

### **THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF BEING DISCOURAGED BY WEARY, HARDENED LEADERS**

I remember when I was just a young man, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four. I don't mean this critically; I just want to encourage some young people. I remember four or five men of God that I went to. I mean, I opened my heart wide to them, and I was reading books on prayer and revival. I was trying to find a man of God who was forty, fifty, or sixty. I was twenty. This went on for a number of years. I spent those years searching for someone who could encourage me as to the reasonableness of spending four or five hours a day in prayer, "Because you know, if this is the end of the age and intercession is so vital, could I do it a little with you?" I couldn't find a man of God who was over forty years old that took prayer seriously. I'm not saying there weren't any, but I couldn't find one. Every man of God I talked to gave me reasons why it wasn't practical to persevere in prayer. I said, "I'm going crazy right now. These are men of God I greatly esteem."

Yet every one of them looked me in the eye and said, "It's unreasonable, what you're doing."

I walked away brokenhearted. It wasn't a small thing. I was devastated the first four or five times. At the end of it, I settled the issue: "This is just how it is today in the Body of Christ," but I'm not going that way any longer. By the grace of God the Lord has held me for those twenty years. I just wanted to find a man of God to give me a reason and a way to do it, to press in. Every one of them gave me reasons not to stand. I said, "What's going on here?"

Saul said in 1 Samuel 17:33, "You are not able to stand." By that he meant, "You're a kid. You're just a youth. You don't understand the practicalities. You can't give your self to God that way, because there are all these other dimensions." I remember saying to some of them, "I don't want some of those other dimensions. I don't really want those." I don't mean to be the hero of my own story, but that was a painful reality for about four or five years, and then I decided not to expect much, just to go ahead and go for it. Saul says, "You're just a youth." Well, that's one good thing about youth: They're like wet cement; they haven't dried yet. They're still

ready; they're still willing to ride on it before it dries. Once that cement dries and it dries wrongly, you have to get the jackhammer out and break up the foundations through a lot of tribulation and a lot of trouble. Normally the youth are reckless and a little out of touch with some things, but if they've got a fire we need to see some anointed older men and women in the church that help that fire grow into maturity without putting the fire out.

Saul gave a number of reasons for not standing, and you can develop this. It's a fantastic list. He gave the expertise of Goliath, the cleverness of Satan's kindness, the reason Satan is so successful. "He's a man of war from his youth! He has a history of victories! Don't challenge him. Accept the status quo."

### **GOD STARTS YOU OUT WITH PERSONAL VICTORIES THAT REQUIRE A SPIRIT OF VALOR**

David said, "Yes, but I killed a lion and a bear. The spirit of might came upon me. This isn't the first time." Beloved, God doesn't typically start you out on a national crisis. He gives you personal victories of a smaller nature that require the same spirit. I mean, a lion and a bear is pretty serious. I remember going to the zoo and seeing a lion. It's scary. I went to the safari in east Africa where there was nothing between me and a lion but the glass in the car and the man with his foot. I said, "You get that foot ready!" That lion was gigantic. I said, "Whoa, this thing is bigger than the zoo and it's scary."

He said, "It could knock this car over." It was a cheap little tin car.

I said, "What's the chance of something going wrong with the motor?"

He said, "Not very likely."

I said, "Well, let's keep this thing revving." It was frightening. I thought of young David. To kill a lion and a bear takes a spirit of might, the same spirit that was on him to take on Goliath, but to a lesser degree. There are personal victories through which God begins to release a spirit of might in our individual and secret life before He does it in our public life. We don't start operating in our public life with Goliath. We start in our private life tackling some monumental issues, the lion and the bear.

### **"YOUR SERVANT HAS KILLED BOTH LION AND BEAR"**

Here in 1 Samuel 17:36, David is talking about himself. He says, "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." He tells him, "I'm telling you, the enemies of God will be just like them"—because it's the same spirit of might. Then he says, "God will deliver me" (v. 37, paraphrased). "God will deliver me. God will deliver me. The power of God is upon my heart right now." This wasn't natural courage. This was a spirit of might.

### **SAUL PUT HIS ARMOR ONTO DAVID, BUT DAVID WAS UNABLE TO WEAR IT**

So what did Saul do? He put his own armor onto David (1 Sam. 17:38). He said, "Well, then let me put on you my professional armor. Now that you're going to take a stand, let me bring you up like I was brought up. Let me put my garments on you."

But beloved, you can't wear Saul's garments. David says, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them" (v. 39). He says, "I don't have any personal experience in your ways Saul. My faith doesn't operate according to the way you operate. I can't wear your garments. I have to have my own call."

I've had young people want to do what I do, and I think of this verse. You can't wear another man's armor; you have to wear your own. In this case it was a negative. You can't walk in another man's or another woman's calling; you have to have your own commission from the Lord.

### **THE ENEMY WAS INSULTED BY DAVID'S CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD**

The Philistine looked and saw David (1 Sam. 17:42). He disdained him; he mocked him; he laughed at him. He said, "You have to be kidding." Here he says, "Am I dog, that you come to me with sticks?" (v. 43). Because David was carrying the slingshot. The enemy was insulted by David's confidence in the Lord. He said, "I will kill you" (v. 44, paraphrased).

### **"WHEREVER THE CARCASS IS, THERE WILL THE EAGLES BE GATHERED"**

But David said to him, "You come to me with a sword, you come to me with all your political machinery, you come to me with all your technology. You may have every radio station and every TV station, every president in the earth behind you, you may have ten million dollars, you come to me with a sword, I don't care what kind of machinery you come against me with." Because the Philistines had iron. They were a step up from the armies of Israel. "But I don't need the machinery. I don't need the advanced weaponry of the day. I come to you in the name of the Lord. I've heard from God. I come before the God you've defied, and He's moving. He has whispered in my heart" (1 Sam. 17:45, paraphrased). That was key; David had the Word of the Lord in his heart. "This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you and take your head from you"—and here is the key—"This day I will give the carcasses of the army of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (v. 46).

The reason I quote that is because in Revelation 19:11-17, twice John the apostle quotes this phrase. David is tapping into something that has eschatological dimensions to it. He's standing before a giant where the power of God is going to break in and intervene. Because the coming of the birds of the air is an image used in the Bible on several occasions. When a general would go to war, he would execute slaughter, and all the corpses would be laid on the ground. They would then retreat to go back to their city or town, and they would look back a few miles and there would be thousands of buzzards flying in the air, which was a sign for all to see that the great battle was over and the slain were multiplied throughout. It was like a sign, a neon sign pointing for miles and miles. When the birds of the air gathered, it meant a great slaughter had occurred. The enemies have been defeated. That's a little of what's going on there. That's a prophetic statement that all the earth will know. David is slipping into the spirit of prophecy.

### **"THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU INTO OUR HANDS"**

"The assembly shall know that the Lord doesn't save with technology" (1 Sam. 17:47, paraphrased). There's nothing wrong with technology, but we don't trust it. "So-and-so has more clout. He has more money. He has more everything!" It doesn't matter. If we have the Word of the Lord, it doesn't matter what So-and-so has, believer or unbeliever, if they stand against the Word of the Lord. "Let all the assembly know"—let the Body of Christ know that God doesn't save by machinery. "The battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

### **A WARNING AGAINST VAINGLORY: WATER REACHES ITS OWN LEVEL IN DUE TIME**

I run into young men and women and old men and women all the time who have a real chip on their shoulder, because they say, "If I would get a platform, then I know my ministry would take off." I've been around enough to know that giving someone a platform isn't the way to jump start their ministries. I know that. I've watched

this for twenty-plus years. I've seen a number of men get a platform, and two years later they're right where they were and they're mad. They think, "if I can break in, if I can get the mailing list or the profile or if I can get *Charisma* magazine to back me up or get the key men to say my name or endorse something, then it would work." Beloved, it doesn't come down to that kind of stuff. Someone may do that for you here and there. At the end of the day, there's a life of God that's released in you or there's not. I don't care how famous the man is. He can give you a platform, and maybe ten people will have you come to different meetings, but it will all fizzle out to nothing. Water reaches its own level in due time.

I look at folks and say, "Man I've heard this so many times, I can hardly bear to hear it once more." I say, "The battle isn't the machinery. The life of God and the commissioning of God—go fight some lion and bear in your personal life and the Lord may have you take on a Goliath some time." Of course the great thing about David is that David didn't care about Goliath, lions, or bears. David wanted to love God and live before God. That's what gave David power. "And all the assembly will know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands" (1 Sam. 17:47).

### **THE REALITY OF THE PERIL OF THE SITUATION INTO WHICH DAVID WALKED**

"So it was, that when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:48). I mean, how unnerving! There is no intimidation in this man's heart. It's the real thing. It's not hype. It's not hamburger helper worked over a few times. He didn't come from the conference all jazzed up, and now he wants to go do something radical that will phase out in time. This is flowing out of the reality of his life with God. This is real. He's down in the valley. I mean, imagine it. The armies are encamped on both sides, all around. There are tens of thousands on each side. This massive Valley of Elah is about fifteen miles from Bethlehem, from his home town. He's down there; there's the giant on one side; all the massive thousands on the other, and the security of the nation hangs in the balance. We're talking about the men slaughtered, the children enslaved, the women raped and killed. I mean, this is serious. This isn't a game; this isn't something they went and fought so they could stay up late over pizza and tell the story of how cool it was. This was reality. This was reality, and I'm not talking about David's natural courage here. I'm talking about the spirit of might, because when the spirit of might wasn't on him he shook like a leaf. But I tell you, he put himself in front of that fire. He put his heart in front of the presence of God and the spirit of might, and he became vulnerable to it; he became accessible to it. He didn't live in it non-stop, but he had more experiences of it than he would have had if he had never postured himself before God. The spirit of might isn't something that we can control, but it's something we can be accessible to by giving ourselves to the Lord, because part of the spirit of might, part of the beauty of fearlessness, the beauty of courage, is this: Courage isn't just that God makes your heart pound with boldness; your heart gets more courageous when the list of things you have to have goes down. Part of the make-up of courage is not wanting very many things; therefore, you don't have to maintain them. You don't have to fight for them. You don't have to worry about them. You don't have to spend all your energies to keep propping them up.

### **A PERSONAL EXAMPLE: THE ACQUISITION OF A CHURCH BUILDING (JUNE 1985)**

But look at David in 1 Samuel 17:48 David hurried. He ran. Here is the Philistine; he's running at him. He says, "This is real. It's the real thing. It's not just hype; it's the real thing. I know. I know. There's no intimidation in me right now." David is saying, "This is for real." I know a few times in my life where the Lord really touched me and I made the bold stand. Then afterwards it's like, "O Lord, what I would do for the spirit of might now." I'll give you an example as we come to the end of this session. I remember one time in 1984 when our church was just a year and a half old. We were renting a facility, and the Lord had already given us two or three pretty

substantial supernatural provisions financially, meaning they got our attention as a church. This was December of 1984, and I said, “We’ve got to get a building.”

Everyone said, “Yes, we do.”

So I said, “What I’m going to do is seek the Lord and find out what the Lord says about a building. There are ten ways to get a building. How does the Lord want us to get a building? I don’t want to do it how the other guy got a building. I don’t want to wear someone else’s armor. I want to do it for us.” I love to tell this story. So I went off for a week of prayer and fasting. It took me about three years. I honestly wasn’t being deceptive, I just never remembered to say this, but I only fasted about half a day. The whole church prayed for me and I came back and told the story and they all clapped, but I forgot to fast when I went in; in other words, it just didn’t happen. But the whole church laid hands on me to go pray and fast for a week. I felt stirred to do it. I came back. I literally heard the word of the Lord in a definitive manner. I came back and said, “I’ve heard the word of the Lord.”

Everyone was cheering: “Yay, prayer and fasting works!” But again, it took me three years to tell them, because I literally forgot to mention that. I remember the Sunday morning when I was telling the story, “I didn’t fast,” and a bunch of guys were screaming. It was really fun, but anyway.

The Lord said, “Go back. Give all your money to the poor as a church, and every week just keep giving all your surplus to the poor, everything that you have, and save nothing, and I will give you a building.” I got up in the spirit of might. I mean it was real. We had a little in the reserve. I said, “We’re giving everything away, and every week we’re going to give everything away.”

“Yay!” There were maybe about 800 people in the church, and they were all cheering: “Yay, this is God and this is so noble!”

Well, that was great. Now it’s about eight weeks later. We have zero money. The people are saying, “When will we get a building anyway?”

I said, “Well, the Lord said He would give us a building.”

“When?”

“I don’t know when.”

“Where?”

“I don’t know where, either.” I remember feeling that little palpitation, thinking, “Oh my goodness; I’ve done it this time.” But it really was the Lord. So when the spirit of might comes on you, it’s not like it never, ever lifts or never, ever wanes but when it’s there, it’s there, and the Lord provided us with this building in the most astounding way. One of the prophetic men stood up on February 1. On February 1 he prophesied and said, “In four months, by June 1, the Lord is going to provide the building He promised you.” This was February of 1985, six or eight months later from the summer. He said, “Within four months, by June 1, the Lord will provide a building for you.” We were meeting in a rented facility in the high school auditorium.

Everyone cheered. I was a little unnerved by that because four months comes really fast! I thought, "It's a great meeting, but what if...? I mean, it's a great thing and everyone is happy, but what if it's not real?"

Two men came up in business suits, just like he said, on about May 15. We were two weeks away, and I was getting nervous. These two men asked me out to lunch; so I went with Noel Alexander, and they told us about this building, and they said, "Some problems came along and we would like you to take it. We would like to give you the keys on June 1."

I went to the Lord and said, "So that's how this stuff works." We gave the money away. The spirit of might was there. It lifted for a while. I mean, it really did. There was a struggle; I've got to tell you that part. The Lord gave us this building. We had it paid for, debt-free, in three years. It was a magnificent thing the Lord did. There are so many sub-parts to the story.

### **GREATNESS IS THE HEART OF GOD MANIFEST IN THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE**

In 1 Samuel 17:48 David hurried out. He put his hand in the bag and took out a stone. He slung it and struck the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead. He fell on his face to the earth. I like that. That's reminiscent of what was still to come. David would later say that the Lord will cause all the enemies of God to become a footstool for the Messiah, for the Lord (Ps. 110:1). Goliath is a picture of the enemies of God lying prostrate before God, flat on his face. David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; he struck the Philistine and killed him, but there was no sword in the hand of David. There was no machinery. God isn't against machinery; He just doesn't want us to count on it. Always in ministry we have confidence in how big our profile is. I tell you, the Lord could shut something big down in a moment and He could breathe on something small and make it big, but neither of them are great because of their size, either way it goes. Something is great because the heart of God is manifest in the heart of people who are a part of it, not because of its size.

David prevailed. There was no sword in his hand. David ran over to the Philistine, stood over him, took his sword, drew it, and killed him with his own machinery (1 Sam. 17:50). The champion was dead. Look at 1 Samuel 17:52: The spirit of faith came on everyone. They arose, shouted, pursued. Again, I'm not calling them hypocrites. There's an impartation when the spirit of faith is upon a small number, and it can spread if the others are willing and have open spirits. When the cry of the Lord goes forth fearlessly, it gives courage.

### **THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL PLUNDERED THE SPOIL OF THE ENEMY**

"Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered"—took back—"the spoil of the enemy" (1 Sam. 17:53, paraphrased). Jesus said, "First you must bind the strongman, and then you will spoil his house" (Mt. 12:29). Here they were plundering the enemy's house. Amen. That can be an application in our corporate life; that's mostly how I've applied it. It can be an application in your personal life. I remember in those days where I felt so barren in my prayer life. I remember really saying this; I'm not being overly-dramatic, because the Lord has been so gracious in this area in these last years, but I remember from about the ages of eighteen to twenty-three, I legitimately felt the despairing conclusion. It felt like a conclusion. I was despairing that I couldn't find any joy or enjoyment of the Word of God. The Word of God was a burden to me to read. I remember I couldn't find any flow of the Holy Spirit in prayer at all for a number of years. I'm not saying it will take you a number of years; every person is different. I remember complaining to the Lord, "Will I ever enjoy prayer and the Word? Will I ever have liberty? Will it ever flow like a river on the inside of me like the people who, I read about in history?"

You say, “Well, that’s cute.” No, it wasn’t cute. It was despairing. I ached over that because I was convinced it would never change. I didn’t have faith. I believed it would never change, but I watched it to change.

**THE PLANT YOU PLANTED WILL GROW IN THE NIGHT WHILE YOU ARE UNAWARE**

It says in Mark 4 that the kingdom of God is like the man who sows the seed; he goes to bed at night and the seed grows and he doesn’t know how it grew. He awakens the next morning and says, “The plant is there!” In other words, when you’re sleeping or not attending to it, when you’re not measuring it, when you can’t watch it and discern it, it’s still growing.

There was something happening in my individual life. It was growing, but I didn’t watch it. I couldn’t measure it. I was sleeping. I was completely unaware of it. I was going through, putting myself before the Lord, but never aware of any change. Change was happening on the inside, though. I couldn’t feel it. I didn’t know it. I didn’t think about it. I couldn’t measure it. I was so used to not liking it; my whole identity was wrapped up in not liking prayer and the Word. I did it, but I never liked it. I just concluded, named myself, that I would never like prayer and the Word. I mean, I didn’t literally name it, but that was the profile I carried in my heart before God. I would say, “Well, it’s me again, the man who doesn’t like prayer.” I literally named myself in my private life with God in the sense that when I defined myself before God, I was always a man who would never change. I said, “God, it’s ridiculous.” I would always complain.

**“YOU REALLY LOVE THE WORD OF GOD, DON’T YOU?”**

I remember a Saturday morning meeting. I can remember it like it was yesterday. I was twenty-three years old. We were having a question-and-answer time with some people. I was teaching a Saturday morning new believer’s class or something. There were about fifty people there; I don’t really remember. But I can remember that room, and this lady said, “Well, how long have you enjoyed the Word like you do now?”

It hit me like a ton of bricks. I said, “What?”

She said, “Well, how long have you really enjoyed the Word like you do now? I mean, you obviously enjoy the Word.”

I said, “I do... don’t I?”

She said, “Oh, yes. Are you kidding? You love the Word!”

I thought, “Huh... I don’t know when that happened.” I said, “I love the Word; I love the Word.”

Everyone else was looking around, saying, “Mike is losing it...”

I literally began to weep. I said, “I can’t believe it. I love... yeah, it works for me, too. I love the Word...!”

They were thinking, “Whoa, this is getting really weird.”

I had never thought about it. I didn’t know when it had happened; I couldn’t tell. I said, “I don’t know. I do, though, don’t I?”

### **THE CONTINUAL EBB AND FLOW OF AFFECTION FOR THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD**

Then I remember I lost my love for the Word and prayer a number of times, and the first couple of times I lost it I panicked, and then when it returned again I began to build a history with God of confidence that those things ebb and flow. Now when I feel dry, I'm as sure that it will become hot again in the Lord if I just stay with it, but it took me two or three cycles before I lost the panic spirit, the fear that rose up when things went dry with me again. I mean, I remember the first time it went dry. I said, "Oh no! My life is over forever again!"

The Lord said, "No, no. Because through the very way that I'm wooing you and defeating this giant, I'm creating more hunger. I'm creating a little tenderness in you. The struggle will give you gratitude which will result in humility at the end of the day. Through the struggle I'm showing you things so that you'll feel the pain when other people don't feel the love for the Word and the presence of God."

But the first couple of times it lifted for a few months I was panicked. I said, "It was just a momentary thing that came on me." After a few cycles of that my confidence from my personal history in God was built. I said, "No, that's how it goes: It ebbs and it flows in order to give us compassion when we have victory, to give us gratitude, which is the fuel of humility, in victory, to give us a little of understanding of how victory is walked out.

Beloved, let me tell, you the Goliaths in your life—oh, that we could give a list of twenty Goliaths you're facing! It says, "I will defy you." There are many, many different struggles. I tell you, when prayer and the Word gets a little lively, just a little lively in your heart, you feel differently about all those Goliaths. You feel differently about all those Goliaths. I'm not saying, "Just go read the Bible more and all your problems will go away." I'm saying, "Open your spirit to God. Put your heart in front of the fire and your heart will feel differently over time." Then the Goliaths look very different when you've got a spirit of revelation on you.

Amen. Let's stand.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

Lord, we love You. Oh Lord, we do love You. Lord, we say, "What are these voices that defy us? Whether Goliath or Saul, whether from the camp of the enemy or from the camp of the redeemed, you cannot stand. You won't be different." Lord, we say no to the voice of Saul. We say no to the voice of Goliath, within the camp and without. Yes we might be youths in age or in experience, or youths in our immaturity in the Spirit, but regardless of our age, Lord, we have Your Word growing in our heart. We won't be defied. We won't be set down. We won't lose our hope. For is there not a cause? Is there not a reason to take a stand in these days? We ask You, Lord, for that beauty of the might of God, the courage of God to stand. I ask that You would impart it into these people in the name of Jesus. Amen and amen.