

DAVID THE WARRIOR

When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel and crossed the Jordan; he advanced against them and formed his battle lines opposite them. David formed his lines to meet the Arameans in battle, and they fought against him. But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven thousand of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also killed Shophach the commander of their army.

First Chronicles 19:17-18

It's easy to think of David as the shepherd boy watching over his flock, who at the end of the day played his harp and sang psalms to God. It's a little harder to think of David as a ruthless soldier who slew thousands.

1. What do we notice about the contrasting responses of both King Saul and David in First Samuel 19:8?

Saul was a not a warrior. The first major battle that David fought for the Lord was his battle with Goliath the Philistine. The Philistines had long been the enemies of Israel. Israel had wanted a king largely to unite and lead them into battle against the Philistines. Since Saul's appointment as king he had failed to completely route the Philistines. His first encounter against the Philistines was a dismal, pathetic, half-hearted attempt described in First Samuel 13:1-14 where most of his men fled in terror against the mere sight of the Philistine army. True warriors inspire others by their relentless determination to completely give their all in order to win the battle. Saul was not a warrior. Warriors look for where the battles are, and then get into the thick of them.

2. Note how Saul responded to the Philistine aggression as described in First Samuel 17:11. What affect would this have had on the people following him? (note 1Sam. 17:24)

The word dismay means to fall down in terror, break down, be confused, and be discouraged! We note here the importance of God's leaders. If you aspire to leadership in the church, you must have a warrior spirit.

3. When young 17-year-old David arrived on the scene, what was his response, and what does this tell us about him? (1Sam. 17:32)
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From an early age, David was known for his warrior spirit (1Sam. 16:18). He spoke like a warrior (one who encourages others about the upcoming battle). But more importantly, he wasn't just a person of talk; he was a person of action.

4. When David had his warrior qualifications challenged by Saul, what did he use as his credentials for fighting Goliath? (1Sam. 17:34-37)
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If we want the qualifications to fight the big battles, let's learn to fight the immediate ("little") ones first (note Prov. 24:10).

5. In First Samuel 17:38-39 Saul gives David his armour. What lessons can we learn from David's response to this?
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David went out against Goliath with "proven" weaponry. We must each discover what it takes for *us* to get on top of our own challenges. What works for you might not work for someone else.

6. What do you do to get on top of the discouraging attacks of the enemy that you face?
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7. How does David's response to Goliath in First Samuel 17:45-47 reveal the fundamental difference between himself and King Saul?
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Note the affect David's courage and warrior spirit had on the men of Israel (1Samuel 17:52). Your faith affects the faith of others! David was a warrior all the days of his life, except, sadly, on one occasion (2Sam. 11:1ff). Today we too can be warriors for God (2Cor. 10:3-4; 1Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2Tim. 2:3-4).

Amen.