

session 6 study guide

heroic leadership

starter

MOST ADMIRABLE LIST: List 5 to 10 people whom you most admire. These can be celebrities, sports figures, famous statespersons, teachers, friends or family—whichever. When you are finished, answer the questions that follow.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

1. What do you most admire about these people?

2. Which of these people would you most like to be like? Why?

message

In 1 Samuel 17, we find the story of David and Goliath. David was probably a teenager at the time this event took place, but even at his young age, he had great faith in God and His faithfulness to His people. We see this faith in action when he visited his brothers in the Israelite army on the battlefield and first saw Goliath.

A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. . . .

Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel."

David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him" (1 Samuel 17:4-11,25-27).

1. Why was the Israelite army intimidated by the Philistines?

2. What was Goliath's challenge to the Israelites? Would anyone in the Israelite army accept it?

3. How did David respond when he first saw Goliath?

David was a “heroic leader” because he was willing to follow God in spite of the circumstances. Because of his confidence in God, he put seasoned soldiers—and even his king—to shame. Yet David’s confidence did not come from faith in his own abilities.

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.”

“Now what have I done?” said David. “Can’t I even speak?” He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.

David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” 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.”

But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 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.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you. . . .”

Then [David] 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. . . .

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 Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the

whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:28-37,40,45-47).

1. What was Eliab's charge against David? On what was his accusation founded?

2. Based on what you read in these verses, what was David's source of confidence?

3. What qualifications did David give to Saul for why he could represent the Israelites against Goliath?

4. What was David's goal in taking a heroic stand at this time?

5. What a difference perspective can make! When the Israelite soldiers looked at Goliath, what did they see? When David looked at Goliath, what did he see?

dig

David used his experience as a shepherd combined with his confidence in God to defeat Israel's enemy. His heroic leadership inspired a nation to take confidence in God. We are not facing any Philistines today, but our battles can feel as intimidating as the one the Israelites were facing against Goliath. Fortunately, God has equipped us with His spiritual armor so that we can take a stand for Him.

1. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Fill in the blanks below for each piece or equipment that Paul describes.

Stand firm then, with the _____ of truth buckled around your waist, with the _____ in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the _____. In addition to all this, take up the _____, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the _____ and the _____, which is the word of God. And _____ on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

2. Why does Paul state we are to put on the full armor of God?

3. How do truth, righteousness, faith and salvation protect us?

4. How do the readiness of the gospel of peace, the Word of God and prayer help us be heroes for God?

5. How does our choice to use our offensive weapons of battle impact the people who see our lives?

6. In Philippians 4:13, Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (NKJV). David could have listened to his brother and the other Israelites and doubted that God would deliver them. But instead, he was confident that God would provide the victory. Based on the story of David and Goliath, how would you define a hero?

7. How does a person's relationship with God impact his or her choice to step up as a leader for God?

8. How does heroic leadership inspire others to have confidence in God?

apply

An American Indian legend tells about a brave who found an eagle's egg and put it into the nest of a prairie chicken. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them.

All his life, the changeling eagle—thinking he was a prairie chicken—did what the prairie chickens did.

He scratched in the dirt for seeds and insects to eat. He clucked and cackled. And he flew in a brief thrashing of wings and flurry of feathers no more than a few feet off the ground. After all, that's how prairie chickens were supposed to fly.

Years passed, and the changeling eagle grew very old. One day, he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. Hanging with graceful majesty on the powerful wind currents, it soared with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

“What a beautiful bird!” said the changeling eagle to his neighbor. “What is it?”

“That’s an eagle. The chief of the birds,” the neighbor clucked. “But don’t give it a second thought. You could never be like him.”

So the changeling eagle never gave it another thought. And it died thinking it was a prairie chicken.¹

1. What is the tragedy of the story?

2. Why do people often settle for less than what they were intended to be?

3. How can believing that all things are possible through Christ change your life?

4. How can believing this change the impact you have for Christ in the lives of people you know?

5. How can sharing your faith and serving others be a battle?

6. If you could do anything you wanted in Christ, what would you do?

reflect

Being a heroic leader means putting God first in your life. It means caring more about Jesus than the things of the world and saying no to the world's standards. It means being willing to lose your prestige to follow the call of God and pay the price of faithfulness to Him. It also means re-aligning your goals in life to focus solely on Him. From a Christian perspective, heroes are not always famous or successful, but they are always *faithful*. God is not looking for superstars—He is looking for obedient followers.

1. If you could do anything with your life, what would it be?

2. What tempts you to settle for second-best in your life?

3. Put a checkmark by any of the following areas where you think you need to work on standing strong for God:

- ☐ Attitudes
- ☐ Relationship with God
- ☐ Acts of service
- ☐ Relationships with others
- ☐ Lifestyle
- ☐ Sharing your faith

4. What tends to keep you from “going for it” in these areas?

5. What encouragement do you need from your family, friends and church to choose to “go for it” for God?

6. How can using the gifts God has given you make you a hero for God?

meditation



After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: "I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do."

ACTS 13:22

Note

1. "The Changeling Eagle," *Christopher News Notes*, no. 229.