

Be Brave Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one thing you were afraid of as a child?
2. What is one talent you have that others might not be aware of?

Read the following passage: 1 Samuel 17:1-53.

David is a remarkable figure. God sought David at a pivotal moment in Israel's history. The book of Judges describes the period in Israel's history after the leadership of Moses and Joshua and before the creation of Israel's monarchy. It was a dark era. As the book of Judges heads toward its conclusion, conditions in Israel continue to deteriorate, and a key refrain is repeated: *In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.* (Judges 21:25)

At the beginning of 1 Samuel, things are not much better. Households are in conflict and religious leaders are abusing their power. Eventually the people ask for a king. They are not concerned about what inevitably happens when you give one individual that much power, they are just tired of being routed by their enemies. They want someone to lead them in battle. And so God gives them a king named Saul. Saul leads Israel to a few victories, but soon his character crumbles under the pressure. After Saul's repeated failures, God sends the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul's successor. As Samuel looks over Jesse's sons, God gives Samuel this reminder:

"Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. 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, the youngest of Jesse's sons had a fine appearance, but that's not why God chose him. God chose him because of his character. David's extraordinary character came into public view in what became the most famous episode in David's life: his triumph over Goliath.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. David demonstrated extraordinary bravery in the face of Goliath's threats. How might bravery be important in the context of your life? Are you taking any risks for God? Do you see any areas of your life in which fear is keeping you from taking a step God wants you to take? Explain. How do we recognize the difference between a potentially brave action and a merely foolish action?
2. How did David's relationship with God empower him to take a courageous step? Is your view of God helping you to be brave? If not, what do you think is getting in the

way?

3. We might find ourselves feeling confident in a particular situation for many different reasons: we have been in the situation before, we are well resourced, we spent a lot of time preparing for the situation, we have a high level of skill in the relevant areas, we are better equipped than the people around us, etc. As we grow in skill and experience, what can we do to continue growing in God-centered confidence as well?
4. Read Proverbs 28:1. What is the connection between righteousness and courage? Have you seen this connection play out in your own life? Explain.
5. How did David's previous experiences prepare him for an encounter with Goliath? What are some courageous steps you could take in your current circumstances that might prepare you for courageous steps in the future?
6. Why do you think Saul wanted to dress David in his armor before he went out to face Goliath? Can you think of times when you wished you had somebody else's gifts, talents, or personality instead of your own? How can a proper view of ourselves and a proper view of God lead us to be braver people?
7. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, was a very bold individual. How did the foundation of his boldness change after Jesus' death and resurrection? How might God use our failures to make us more confident people?
8. Read 1 Samuel 17:45-47. How might we use David's words as a blueprint for confidence in the face of our fears?
9. What is one area in which you would like to overcome fear and become more confident in the Lord?

Pray