

STUDY GUIDE
GROUPS / INDIVIDUALS

SIX SESSIONS

Goliath *Must* Fall

Winning the Battle Against Your Giants.



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SESSION ONE

Dead but Still Deadly

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 PETER 5:8-9



Orientation

When Louie was a college student, he worked summers at a church camp on a rustic, jungle-esque island off the coast of South Carolina. One of his jobs was to deal with the poisonous snakes and ensure they didn't become too much of a problem on the path to the bathhouse. Louie and some of the camp counselors would wallop a snake on the head with a baseball bat until it was dead. Then they'd hold the head down with the bat and pull on the snake's body until the head popped off. Finally, they'd grind the head down into the sand and bury it with more sand.

Why bury the head? Because even though the snake was dead, there was still enough venom in its fangs to poison anyone who happened to walk by and step on them. The snake's head was *dead but still deadly*.

That's a good picture of our enemy, Satan. Jesus defeated him on the cross. The battle is over, the victory won. Because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection Satan is nothing but a beaten snake with his head torn off. And yet, if we step unwarily on his dead head, those spring-loaded fangs can cause grave harm. If we listen to him or give in to his schemes, we'll get a jab of his crippling venom. It will poison the robust life we are meant to have in Christ.

This week in *Goliath Must Fall*, we'll see this double truth in action. We will explore how on the one hand, Jesus defeated Satan dead on the cross; but on the other hand, that dead serpent's head still has venom. It can still cause serious damage and destruction in our lives.

Pretty much all of us have an area in our lives where Satan threatens to rob our joy and steamroll our capacity to love others. It might be fear, rejection, anger, addiction, or even comfort. We need to know that in Christ, the enemy is dead. We also need Jesus' help to stop stepping on those poison-filled fangs. We need both. In the course of this series, you will discover how to walk in the

victory that Jesus has won and keep from falling prey to the giants that rise up to oppose us. We'll discover that we're called to live from that victory, not for it.

When we look at the account of David and Goliath, we often assume that we are David in the story. We think that if we can just muster enough courage and willpower, we can overcome the enemy through our own efforts. But the truth is that Jesus represents David in this story, and we can only truly overcome the enemy when we rely on his strength, not our own.

Isn't that a huge relief?

Welcome and Checking In

Welcome to the first session of *Goliath Must Fall*. If you or any of your fellow group members do not know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss one of the following questions:

- *How have you changed in the past five years?*

or

- *How would you like to change in the next five years?*

Hearing the Word

Read aloud in the group the following passage from 1 Samuel 17:1-9. This is a familiar story, so as you read listen for any fresh insights and write them down to share with the group.

¹ Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. ² Saul and the

Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines.³ The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

⁴ A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels;⁶ on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

⁸ 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.⁹ 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."

In groups of two or three, share your answers to the following questions:

What was one thing that stood out to you from the Scripture, and why?

How easy is it for you to think of yourself as David in this story, going up against the Goliath in your life? Why did you answer the way you did?

What do you think we are meant to learn from this story?

Watch the Video

Play the video segment for session one. Use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Notes

It's not God's will for us to have "giants" in our lives that are demoralizing us and stealing God's glory from us.

Our enemy is like a snake without a head—dead but still deadly. He has been defeated at the cross, but there is still poison in his fangs.

Just as in David's day, the enemy will send giants against us to torment us and make us miserable. We can't allow those giants to have power in our lives.

We often view David and Goliath as the classic underdog story. The message we often take away from the story is that if we try hard enough, we can overcome any giant.

But we are not “David” in the story. We can’t bring our giants down by trying harder. *Jesus* represents David, and he is the one who does the work in bringing Goliath down.

When Jesus sets us free, we are free indeed (see John 8:36).

David wasn’t motivated simply by his own personal freedom. He was motivated to defeat Goliath so he could bring glory and fame to God.

If there is a giant with its foot on our neck, God is not getting the glory in our lives. This is why any Goliath that comes against us *must fall*.

Group Discussion

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. What do you think is meant by living *from* victory as opposed to living *for* it? How might that play out in your life?

2. How do you respond to the notion that Jesus, not you, is the David who has defeated the giant in your life? What are the implications of this for the way you live your life?

3. Jesus has been given “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). The reason Jesus came to earth was to crush the power of sin and death. What difference does this make as to how you view the giant in your life?

4. If Jesus has all authority and has defeated the enemy, and if he wants us to have life to the full, why do you suppose he lets the problems in our lives still have the venom to harm us? How does God’s glory figure into the situation?

5. How do you go about drawing close to Jesus so that you won’t step on the venomous head of a dead snake?

6. Our ultimate defense against the enemy is leaning into the all-sufficiency of Christ. What does his all-sufficiency mean? How can we lean into it?

Living from Victory

For this activity, each participant will need a blank sheet of paper and a pen.

In this session, you have explored the idea that Jesus, not you, is the David who has brought down your Goliath. Your enemy is dead but still deadly, and your hope is in the all-sufficiency of Jesus. Your power to change isn't in Christ-plus-something. It's in Christ-plus-nothing.

On your blank sheet of paper, make a list of things you tend to rely on to make your life work the way you want it to work. Include things about you (your intelligence, your willpower, your determination) and people or things outside you (your phone, your spouse, your money). You may wish to put Jesus on this list—but for now, list only the *things* and *people* you rely on to have as abundant a life as possible.

When everyone is finished writing, the leader will instruct you to tear up the piece of paper. As you do, offer these items up to God and choose to rely on him alone as your source of strength in life. Say a silent prayer that you desire to start living as though you have Christ-plus-nothing—leaning on him instead of yourself.

Closing Prayer

Close the session by praying the words of Psalm 18:1–6, 13–19, and 46–48 together. You can pray it in unison, or you can let your leader say the odd-numbered verses and the group members say the even-numbered verses.

¹ I love you, LORD, my strength.

² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.

⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.

From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears. . . .

¹³ The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.

¹⁴ He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.

¹⁵ The valleys of the sea were exposed
and the foundations of the earth laid bare
at your rebuke, LORD,
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

¹⁶ He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.

¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.

¹⁸ They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the LORD was my support.

¹⁹ He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me. . . .

⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Savior!

⁴⁷ He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,

⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies.

BETWEEN-SESSIONS
PERSONAL STUDY

Session One

You are invited to further explore the material you've covered this week by engaging in any or all of the following between-sessions activities. Remember, this part of the *Goliath Must Fall* experience is not about following rules or doing your homework. Rather these activities—called *Act*, *Worship*, and *Proclaim*—will help you take concrete steps toward deeper connection with Jesus so that he can take down the giant in your life. *Be sure to read the reflection questions after each activity and make a few notes in your guide about the experience.* There will be a time for you to share these reflections at the beginning of the next session.

Act: Write a Letter

Write a letter to Jesus about his all-sufficiency, using either a separate sheet of paper or your journal. You can express questions you still have about what it means. You can thank him for being enough to defeat Satan and everything that comes against you. You can confess to him the other things you often turn to for dealing with the challenges in your life. Tell him any areas of your life where you're struggling, and ask him to help you know that he is all-sufficient for these concerns. You can talk with him about any

of the ways you are experiencing the deadliness of your enemy, and ask him to help you know that your enemy is really dead for good.

Feel free to be entirely candid and blunt with what you write. If you aren't yet able to understand that he is all-sufficient for everything life throws at you, say so. The psalmists were very blunt in the way they poured out their hearts to the Lord.

Make a few notes about what it was like to write this letter to share with your group next week.

Giants come in all shapes and sizes, some subtle and others stark. The good news is it's not God's plan for you to live with *anything* standing in the middle of your life, demoralizing you day by day by day. These giants harm you and rob God of his glory in your life. God wants you to live free. God wants your giants to fall. He wants you to live without the chains that bind you, unfettered from beliefs that limit you. And you can!

—*Goliath Must Fall*, page xiv

Worship: Offer Your Body

One of the best things you can do to give God full access to your life and your heart is to worship him. Worship puts you in an open posture so that the Holy Spirit can go to work in the deep places of your soul. In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul writes, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” So, for today’s worship experience, you’re going to offer your body to God.

Stand with your arms outstretched. Beginning with your feet, offer the parts of your body to God as instruments of righteousness (see Romans 6:13). Pray aloud if possible. Say something like, “Jesus, I offer my feet to you. Let them take me only into places that are pleasing to you. Help me to walk as you walk. The gospel of peace is like my stabilizing and protective boot (see Ephesians 6:15). I offer my legs to you. Let them support me as I stand firm in faith and as I run in the pathway of your commands.”

Pay particular attention to parts of your body that are related to ways you’ve experienced the continued deadliness of your enemy. For example, if you’ve struggled with negative thoughts, address that when you offer your mind to God so that you can focus on “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable” (Philippians 4:8).

Take your time. When you’re finished, allow a couple of minutes to rest in God’s presence.

Take note of how God uses this activity to speak to you. Write a few sentences about it below to share with the group next week.

God doesn't want us to be demoralized if we face more than one giant that needs to be taken down. He's able to take them all. . . . Jesus wants to ensure us that he is completely and totally able to take down the giants in our lives. It may look as though the six-fingered, six-toed, furious, foaming, fearless thing coming at us can't be beaten. But through the power of Jesus, whatever needs to be overcome can—and will—come down.

—*Goliath Must Fall*, page 19

Proclaim: Share the News

If you're getting something out of this study, don't keep the news to yourself. One great way to worship God is to proclaim what you know about him to others. "As for me, I will declare this forever; I will sing praise to the God of Jacob" (Psalm 75:9). You might tell a friend what you've learned about David and Goliath or about Jesus' all-sufficiency or about your enemy being dead but still deadly. You might confide in someone about a giant in your life and ask them to pray for you.

Write here a few sentences of what you might share with a friend—believer or nonbeliever.

After you share your insight with someone, make a few notes about how it went so that you can report back to your group next week.

Our ultimate defense against giants—the best defense we have—is to lean into the all-sufficiency of Jesus. Maybe that’s a term you’ve heard before—*all-sufficiency*—but you aren’t quite sure what it means. Or maybe the term is brand-new to you. We need to unpack some Scripture around this great truth: that Jesus is all-sufficient. By *sufficient* we mean that Jesus is *enough*. He is all we need to fulfill God’s greatest purposes for our lives. Jesus is not deficient in anything. Jesus is not lacking or inadequate or meager or poor. He’s fully competent. He’s fully abounding. Thanks to Jesus, we sit at a banqueting table every day; our cups are constantly overflowing, and our plates are constantly full.

—*Goliath Must Fall*, page 38
