

UNSHAKEABLE

FAITH: WEEK 1



STUDENT DEVOTIONS

FROM THE LIFE OF DAVID



Running After God's Own Heart

David is the only person in the entire Bible who God describes as a “man after his own heart.”

Even though David lived over three thousand years ago, we can learn a lot from him! He started out as a lowly shepherd boy and ended up as King of Israel. Not that David was perfect—far from it actually, since along with being a giant slayer, mighty warrior and king, he was also an adulterer, a liar, a murderer and an incredibly lousy husband and father on multiple occasions.

Yet God still called him a man after His own heart. Why? Because over and over, David ran to God in the midst of both his joys and his troubles, and leaned his life on Him.

I hope that gives you hope—because it vividly demonstrates the biblical truth that you don't have to be perfect to have a vibrant, growing, soul-satisfying relationship with God. God loves you unconditionally beyond all you can think or imagine. And like David, you too can run after God and lean your life on Him, even when you fall and fail.

Together we're going to be exploring four distinctive, UNSHAKEABLE threads in David's life that will give you some practical insights on how to do life with God in a real, authentic way that brings joy—even in the tough times—and honors God in everything you do.

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The four threads we'll be unpacking are David's...

1. **...UNSHAKEABLE FAITH** that God was always with him.
2. **...UNSHAKEABLE LOVE** that kept him intimately connected to his God.
3. **...UNSHAKEABLE CALL** to know God and make Him known.
4. **...UNSHAKEABLE RESOLVE** to live for God and advance His kingdom—come what may.

Across the coming four weeks of devo readings, we'll explore a couple particularly significant events in David's life, and we'll look at a couple of his spoken word poems (Psalms) that are filled with his longings and passion. David's brutal honesty and passionate outpourings before God give us an inviting and intriguing glimpse into what a deep, intimate relationship with God actually looks like.

So get ready to connect with God in a fresh, new, authentic way and serve Him with all your heart. Because running after God's heart with all you've got will change you forever!



FACING YOUR GIANTS

So the Philistines and Israelites faced each other on opposite hills, with the valley between them.

Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was over nine feet tall!

...Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "...Choose one man to come down here and fight me! If he kills me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

Now David was the son of a man named Jesse...and he had eight sons...David was the youngest son. David's three oldest brothers stayed with Saul's army, but David went back and forth so he could help his father with the sheep in Bethlehem.

For forty days, every morning and evening, the Philistine champion strutted in front of the Israelite army.

1 Samuel 17:3-16 (selected verses)



Know Your God

Giants actually come in a lot of different shapes and sizes. The giants that taunt us can be visible or hidden. Sometimes they're glaring, sometimes they're subtle. Either way, when they rear their ugly heads, they can wreak havoc with our emotions, relationships and choices and leaves us feeling fearful or defeated.

Most everyone has giants in their life.

Whether the giant that taunts you is guilt, porn, relationship struggles, worry, pride, addiction or something else, we all know what it feels like to have something heavy looming over us and stealing away the joy Jesus came to bring us.



Check Your Heart

Regardless of whether your giant is an in-your-face bully, or of the more subtle variety, God doesn't want you to live your life enslaved to it. He wants to help you take on your giants. He's calling you to a place of deeper intimacy with Him and greater impact for Him. He's inviting you to lean your life on Him and to help others do that too—because He's the ultimate giant-slayer!

Most **everyone** has GIANTS in their life.

Whether the giant that taunts is guilt, porn, relationship problems, worry, addiction or something else...



GIANTS

That's the kind of life the Bible tells us David lived—bravely battling his giants and passionately pursuing an intimate, hold-nothing-back relationship with his giant-slaying God. And the very cool thing is that David's honest, vibrant, faith-filled relationship with God was already deeply rooted during his teen years!

So together, across the coming days of devo readings, let's explore some of the secrets to David's success as a giant-slayer and see what we can learn about how to walk close to God.

Swing Your Sling

Spend a few minutes right now and consider some of the giants you and your friends are currently facing. Maybe they look like...



Then take a moment and pray this simple prayer...

Dear God, you already know the things my friends and I struggle with. I know I can't defeat my giants by myself, and I know I can't help my friends slay their giants without Your help.

So I'm asking for Your help here.

Over these next days of devo readings, please show me what You want me to learn from the life of David that can help me defeat my own giants. Show me how to lovingly come alongside my friends who are struggling, too. I want to know You better and walk closer to You. And I want to share the hope you bring with others. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

DARE TO SHARE PREVIEW

UNDER ESTIMATED

OVER LOOKED

2

One day Jesse said to David, "Take this basket of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread, and carry them quickly to your brothers. And give these ten cuts of cheese to their captain..."

David left his things with the keeper of supplies and hurried out to the ranks to greet his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, came out from the Philistine ranks. Then David heard him shout his usual taunt to the army of Israel.

As soon as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run away in fright...

David asked the soldiers standing nearby, "What will a man get for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of Israel? Who is this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies of the living God?"

...But when David's oldest brother, Eliab, heard David talking to the men, he was angry. "What are you doing around here anyway?" he demanded. "What about those few sheep you're supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle!"

"What have I done now?" David replied. "I was only asking a question!..." Then David's question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

"Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul. "I'll go fight him!"

"Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

1 Samuel 17:3-33 (selected verses)



Know Your God

David was the youngest of eight brothers. Eight! Can you imagine? Life at David's house would very likely have been an endless series of put downs and wrestling matches.

As the youngest son, David had been relegated to the lowly tasks of caring for the sheep and running errands—like delivering bread and cheese to his older brothers who were in the army. But when his father's assignment carried him to the battlefield on one particular day, David was totally shocked at the way Goliath taunted and mocked the Israelites—God's chosen people.

Outraged by what he saw happening, and firm in his unquestioning faith in the One True God, David didn't hesitate to call it like he saw it. How could the Israelite soldiers allow this pagan warrior to continually mock the armies of the living God?

Regardless of his older brother's sneering commentary on his motives, it was crystal clear to young David that someone had to take this giant down. So he boldly told King Saul that he would fight Goliath himself.

The King's response? "Don't be ridiculous! ...You're only a boy."

Check Your Heart

Have you ever been underestimated, overlooked or put down simply because you're young?

Whether you're twitchy, dreamy, awkward, ambitious or a total nerd, don't let others dampen your passion and determination to stand up and make a difference for Jesus with your life!

The truth is that God loves to use the underestimated and overlooked to step out in faith and change their world! Consider the reluctant teenage Queen Esther who saved her nation from annihilation in the Old Testament; or the teenaged Mary who bore the baby that changed the course of human history; or Jesus' disciples—most of whom were very likely teenagers when He first called them to follow Him.



Swing Your Sling

If you don't believe God can use you to make a difference just because you're young, think again! He loves to use the overlooked to accomplish the impossible. God can use you right now to slay giants, stand up for His truth, and impact your friends, your school and your world for Him!

So write a short note to God today and tell Him how it makes you feel to know that He wants to use you in big ways! Maybe you're skeptical, maybe you're excited, but whatever you're feeling, talk to Him about it now...

Dear God,

DARE 2 SHARE PREVIEW

UNAFRAID

3

But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the Lord be with you!" **1 Samuel 17:34-37**



Know Your God

After being dismissed out-of-hand with the King's "Don't be ridiculous!...You're only a boy" speech, did David run away with his tail between his legs, discouraged and dejected? NO! Instead, we find David logically, confidently, methodically making his case to the King about how he planned—with God's help—to take Goliath down.

Today's passage provides some interesting insights into young David's thought process. As he makes his case before the King, we see an inspired mix of strategic thinking, coupled with David's total faith in his God. David had taken an honest assessment of the situation before him, and then drawn on his past experiences to come up with a plan.

Still, David wasn't proud or cocky. He knew it was the Lord who had brought him through his past life-and-death scenarios. And now, he had total confidence that God would see him through this tough spot too!



Check Your Heart

Why was David unafraid? Here are three reasons...

- 1. David knew how faithful God was!** Here's how Lamentations 3:22-23 describes God's faithfulness, *"The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning."* How about you, do you **really** believe that God will be faithful to you now and forever?
- 2. David knew how big God was!** Psalm 147:5 puts it like this, *"How great is our Lord! His power is absolute! His understanding is beyond comprehension!"* How big is **your** God?
- 3. David knew he was not afraid to die.** David phrased it like this in Psalm 23:4a, *"Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me."* It's been said that no one is really ready to live, until they're ready to die. Is that true for you? Are **you** ready to lay down **your** life for the God you love?

David had **total** confidence that God would **see him through** this tough spot!



Swing Your Sling

Take a few minutes and talk to God about your answers to these three questions...

- 1.** In what ways has God shown Himself faithful in your life in the past?
- 2.** Do you see God as big and powerful enough to help you take down your giants?
- 3.** Would you be willing to die for Christ and for the advancement of His Kingdom?