

MAN IN THE MIRROR BIBLE STUDY
BIBLICAL MANHOOD - A MAN WINNING HIS SPIRITUAL STRUGGLES
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Flash alert! Flash alert! At Man in the Mirror we are doing the third annual Project Father's Day. We just went over the 700,000 mark for books to be distributed on Father's Day. Cheri Hulke, the Administrator of the program, has a special offer for you, the men at Friday morning who did not order the books through the normal Web channels. She has two pallets of cases of 48 books over at the Man in the Mirror office of *The Man in the Mirror*, *Seven Seasons for the Man in the Mirror*, and *Ten Secrets for the Man in the Mirror*. So, if you want to get some of these books for your church, neighborhood or place of work, she said you can come over to the office and pick up these cases at \$50 a case - basically \$1 a book, right Jim? Or you can call this number 407-472-2100. Some of you may want to take advantage of that.

Turn in your Bibles, if you would, to 1Samuel: Chapter 17. Let me encourage to go ahead, turn your chairs and get comfortable, and we'll get started. Did you know that 20% of the men who come to Man in the Mirror Men's Bible Study come after we have begun? They just keep streaming in back there. It's amazing - great. You know, the thing is whenever I'm late and somebody gives me a hard time, well, why are you late? It's because something went wrong. If you are habitually late then you're always late, but if you're late occasionally, you're late for a reason. You've already had a flat tire, you've already had an argument with your wife, something has already gone wrong, and then they hammer you for being late, right?

Fellows we've been doing a series on Biblical Manhood which we'll do this week and next week. Then I want to do a one-week talk on the subject of happiness, does God want you to be happy? Then we're going to do a new series, and that series is going to be on Spiritual Discipline. Spiritual Discipline will be the title, so we'll look into things like Bible reading, prayer, etc. It's going to be good; it's going to be good. Actually you'll be the judge of whether or not it's any good.

In this series on Biblical Manhood I've been looking at men in the Bible that we all admire and asking why do we admire them and what do they have in common? There are men like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Sampson, Samuel, David, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and in *The New Testament*, Peter, Paul and others. One of the things that we all would observe in looking at these men is that they are all men who have, at various points in their lives, faced tremendous spiritual struggles. Everyone of the men I have just mentioned to you, in addition to having many successes, have also failed in those times of spiritual testing and struggle.

This morning, what I want to talk about is how is it that we can win this spiritual struggle that life is, and I want to show you how it is easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. It is easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. Somebody is going to come up after this talk and tell me it's not "data;" it's "data." I looked it up in the dictionary this morning, and you can say "data" or "data" or "data." I'm not going to really annoy you and say "data," but let me say "data." It's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion.

A couple of weeks ago, my wife and I were having lunch with our son and the young woman who, in a couple of weeks, will be my daughter-in-law, his fiancé. My wife pulls one out every now and then that really is a good one. She is telling our future daughter-in-law how when she was her age, she went to an Elvis Presley concert, and that Elvis Presley was the sexiest man alive. She said, "I made a vow to myself that I would never marry anyone unless they were as sexy as Elvis." Now, the point is, it's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. Obviously, my wife is a candidate for Bob Willson's Optometry practice. It's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. You know this in your own life, right?

What I want us to do this morning is I want to look at an example of one of these great men of the Bible who looked at the data and came to the right conclusion. I want to show you, also, how some of the people around him did not. So, we're going to look at 1Samuel: Chapter 17, and this is the famous story of David and Goliath. Chapter 17, Verse 1, "Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war..." Then in Verse 2, "Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them." You can go there today to the Valley of Elah, and you can see the two hills, and you can see the little stream that runs down through the middle of the valley. I didn't see it myself, but I was told that there are some ruins of an old Philistine camp that archeologists can go up and take a look at on one of these hills. Verse 8. This champion named Goliath stood and shouted, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? 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.'" Notice the next sentence, Verse 11, "On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified." Why, because it's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. They saw what by every human assessment would be overwhelming odds, but they had not taken into account that God was on their side.

The next thing that happened, and I'll just explain it to you, is that Jesse had eight sons. Three of them had volunteered to go out with Saul and be part of this army. They were out there. Jesse had wanted to know how the boys were doing. David was the youngest so he sent David to check out to see how they were doing and bring back a report. Then David got to the battle line, Verse 21. It says, "Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other." Then Goliath stepped out and shouted his usual defiance. It says in Verse 24, "When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear." King Saul had offered that any man that would go out and kill Goliath that he would give his daughter in marriage, he would make him a rich man, and he would exempt the whole family from taxes. So David asked the guys who were standing around about this. He said, "Who is this Philistine guy?" Then they told him what was going on.

Now in Verse 32, David, then, goes to Saul and he says, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Now Saul is looking at this nice tall giant, and he's looking at this 17-year old boy, and he's looking at the data, and this is what happens in Verse 33. "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.'" You're just a little kid. It's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. "But David," in Verse 34, 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 defied the armies of the living God." Watch this, "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." So Saul let him go out, gave him some armor, puts on the armor, can't even walk in the armor, takes it off, and said, "I can't use that." Then he goes over to the little seasonal stream that's running through the Valley of Elah, and he picks up five smooth stones, (three, four, five) just like I did when I was over there out of that same little stream, and he put them in his little shepherd's pouch. Then he went out and met Goliath and reached into his pouch and pulled out one of those stones, and he slung it at Goliath and knocked him right in the middle of the forehead. You've seen expert marksmen. Did you know I am an expert marksman? I earned an Expert Marksman's Badge, along with 3,000 other guys in my basic training camp. If you could point it in the right direction, they gave you a Expert Marksman's Badge, but the people who use these slingshots have pinpoint accuracy. He was able to land that right in the middle of the forehead of this giant and it sunk into it.

Look down at Verse 43. When they went out to meet each other, the giant said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his Gods. 'Come here,' he said, 'and I'll give your flesh to the birds...and the beasts.'"

Then in Verse 45, "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.'" "You big fat slob. "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." Then David ran out and killed him.

It is easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. The Israelite army came to the wrong conclusion. They ran away in fear. Saul looked at David, and said, "You can't do it." He looked at the data and came to the wrong conclusion. Goliath looked at David and said, "You're just a kid." He looked at the data and came to the wrong conclusion. That's what happens over and over all day long. Christian guys and non-Christian guys are looking at the data and coming to the wrong conclusion.

The thing to see here about the spiritual struggles that we have, down here in Verse 47 in case you missed it, it's not our battle. The struggle is not our struggle. The battle is the Lord's. Proverbs 21: 31 says, "The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord."

I mentioned here a long time ago. It's really one of my favorite stories, but I am just so possessed by the idea that God is in charge. I was walking in with a man this morning, this man right here, and he was telling me about a fairly excruciating struggle that he's involved with right now. He's got a giant. Looking around here, a lot of you guys that I know enough about, some of you I know have giants that you're struggling with right now. It's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion, or the data, or come to the wrong conclusion, isn't it? That doesn't mean they're not giants; they are giants, but that doesn't mean that they are going to slay you. By faith, like David's, you can slay your giants.

My favorite story - we bought a lot. Shook hands at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. Two o'clock the phone rings. Caller says, "Pat, I just wanted to give you a call. This guy told me if I ever wanted to sell the lot, I should give him a call, and I just gave him a call, and he's willing to pay \$10,000 more for the lot than you are." I've been there before, and you have too, and I said, "And?" He said, "Oh, well, you know, I just felt honor bound to give you a call to let you get a chance to match the price." I said, "I was under the impression that we shook hands and made a deal this morning." He said, "We did, but that was before I talked to this other guy." So back and forth for a couple of minutes, and, finally, I said, "Look," I said his name, (which I won't repeat now since he lives in town) "if it's God's sovereign will for us to have this lot, then there's nothing that you or I can do to stop that from happening, and if it's not God's sovereign will for us to have this lot, no amount of me begging you right now is going to make any difference, so you go ahead and do what you need to do." Long pause. After about 20 seconds, he said, "Well, I guess since you've put it like that, you've got the lot." Bring your giants on, baby, bring 'em on! My faith is in the Almighty God, the Sovereignty of God. That's where our faith needs to be. That's where David's faith is going to be because you can look at the data and you won't come to the wrong conclusion. Right?

Now the Bible tells us there are three main types of giants or giants come from three different areas. We are in a real spiritual battle with real spiritual giants, and this is not some abstract war where people don't get hurt, by the way. Man is caught up in his business, may be part of the team building Microsoft, recklessly abandoning all other values except corporate advancement. A seven-year old son says to one of the men, "Dad, if you'll come to my soccer game on Saturday morning, I'll throw all my clothes away." This is not an abstract war. Do you know that tonight 40 percent of the children in the United States will sleep in a home where there is not a father present? Did you know that by the time they reach 18 years of age about half of all young people will have lived significant portions of their lives without any father figure? This is not some abstract war we're talking about here. There are real casualties in this war.

I want to talk to you about these three giants, and the first one I want to talk to you about is the world. The Bible says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world, for if you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. What the world has to offer you, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life does not come from the Father. That comes from the world." This is the biggest source of temptation for a lot of men. John Calvin said, "We are idle factors." Do you think it is possible to be in church for an hour on Sunday, come to the Bible Study on Friday, maybe a couple hours out of the week, and then be immersed in the other 110 waking hours of your week, do you think it would be possible that those two hours would be enough to overcome the other 110, the lies, the temptations that come at us? There's no way, no way Jack, no way Bill. It's not going to happen.

Two languages - there's truth and there's lies. _____125 tells us that we are tempted to change the truth of God for lies. One hundred ten hours a week, we are tempted to exchange the truth of God for lies. So, you're going to walk out of here today, and you're going to go out into a world where all day long you're going to be tempted to exchange the truth of God for lies. There are giants out there. If you really want to be happy, come live in this neighborhood, my house here, put a gate up here to insulate you from the problems of other people. If you really want to be happy, don't you know that Jesus is forever, but money is for now? If you really want to be happy, you need to get you some scratch. The world is going to tell you this all day long. How do we overcome that giant? We have victory over the world by faith in Jesus.

Turn to 1John: Chapter 5. We will not be coming back to Samuel. 1John: Chapter 5, Verse 3. Table leaders I will mention right now. On the back of the questions this morning is an outline and so many scriptures that deal with this (this is really for all of you) that I'm not getting into hardly any of them, but I did a typo and put 1John: 4, Verses 3 and 5, it's actually 1John 5: Verses 3 and 5. Verse 3, "This is love of God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." It is our faith that gives us victory over the world.

Well, two other giants. How about the devil? How do we get victory over the devil? We get victory over the devil by faith in Jesus. Turn with me to Ephesians: Chapter 6, Verse 12 which says, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." The devil and all his little minions. Hey, the devil is no big deal. Do you understand this? The devil's no big deal. He's not omnipotent, he's not omniscient, he's not omnipresent; he's an angel. He's a fallen Michael. He's not a fallen Jesus. He's just a fallen Michael. All he is is another angel that God is letting run around for a little while. He's not that big of a deal. You know how you fell Satan? You just say the Lord's Prayer. Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Lord. Just pray that every day. It's no big deal. Make him go away.

Ephesians: Chapter 6, Verse 16, "In addition to this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." So we get victory over the world by faith, and we get victory over the devil by faith, and the third giant we all have to face is the flesh. Oh, the flesh. You see, these other two come at us from the outside, but the flesh comes from the enemy within. Right?

Turn with me to Galatians: Chapter 2, Verse 20. How do we get victory over the world? By faith. How do we get victory over the devil? By faith. How do we get victory over the flesh? By faith. Because remember, it's easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. The Bible says what, we live by faith not by sight. Sight tells you what? The wrong thing. If you look at sight, and you look at the data, you come to the wrong conclusion, that's what the Bible says, we don't live by sight, we live by faith.

2Corinthians: Chapter 5, Verse 7, "We live by faith, not by sight." We get victory, not by sight. We don't look at the world and figure out _____. We don't look at the world and get sight. We don't see what we need to do. We get victory by faith. We don't look at the devil by sight and, if we do, we get victory by faith.

Look at Galatians 2:20 with me. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Faith is how we kill the giant. Faith is how we get victory over the giant. _____ simply because you don't have faith. Put faith in what? Faith in Jesus. Put your faith in Jesus. He will help you slay your giant. It is too easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. Okay? That's why we don't live by sight; we live by faith. What comes from all this? If we will do this - there are so many guys that are not finishing strong - that's scary. There are a lot of guys coming in here are not finishing strong because you've become lukewarm. Some of you are very strong. Praise God! Some of you have become tepid, milk toast Christians, you're wimpy like a soggy piece of bread. Why because you let these giants scare you. These giants can't scare you. Flesh in the name of Jesus be gone. Devil in the name of Jesus be gone. In the name of Jesus, get back, get back world. Get out of my face. By faith when you look at the data you come to the wrong conclusion.

Finish strong, men, finish strong. Put your faith in Jesus. Be able to say to yourself, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith."

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, golly, it is so easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. Lord, some of us have your _____ this morning inside, coming at us from within and from without. It seems overwhelming, and so when we look at the them, Lord, we feel overwhelmed. Lord, help us to look at our problems, our giants, our struggles the way that David looked at his on his good days, not on his bad. Lord, they all had bad days, we've had bad days, but, Lord, help us to live by faith. Help us to win over our spiritual struggles by faith in Jesus. Lord, would you do this for us? Would you give us today more faith? Lord, would you do this for us today? Would you help us to look at our problems, the giants we face, and not come to the wrong conclusion, but better to live by faith? We ask this in Your name. Amen

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