

# FAMILY CRISIS



## Introduction

St. Jude Hospital is world renowned for its work in helping children with cancer. It was founded in 1962 by Danny Thomas, an entertainer who vowed to memorialize a prayer if it was answered.

At the time Danny had a baby on the way and was struggling to find work. He prayed to God "show me my way in life, and I will build you a shrine" while asking St. Jude Thaddeus to intercede on his behalf. Not long after

that prayer, Danny began finding work and went on to become a star with roles in series such as the Andy Griffith Show, Real McCoys, and Dick Van Dyke Show. Danny sought God in his time of crisis and vowed to honor God with a monument for answering his request. He named the hospital St. Jude to acknowledge the apostle he believe interceded on his behalf with God.

✚ **When have you seen yourself or a family member find favor after seeking God during a crisis?**

## **Session Context**

Since Samuel told Saul that God regretted Saul's kingship and rejected him as king, Samuel had been mourning (1 Samuel 16:1). God sent Samuel to the house of a Judahite named Jesse living in the town of Bethlehem. When he arrived, Samuel invited Jesse' to sacrifice a heifer with him to the Lord. Jesse came to the sacrifice with seven of his sons and presented them to Samuel for anointing, but God did not choose them. Jesse then called for his youngest son, David, to come and upon seeing him, God told Samuel to anoint David as king and God's spirit fell powerfully on David at that time (1 Samuel 16:13).

Not long after (a few months to a couple of years), Israel and the Philistines entered battle. Although David had been anointed king, his time to be king hadn't come yet and Saul remained on the throne. Jesse sent his three eldest sons to fight for Israel in Saul's army, likely because they were the only three in his household that were of military age (20 and older). However, David was already personally familiar with Saul because he served as a musician in Saul's court whenever called upon (1 Samuel 16:14-23).

# Scripture Exploration

## 1 Samuel 17:17-32

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<sup>17</sup> Jesse said to David his son, "Now take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; <sup>18</sup> and bring these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand; and see how your brothers are doing, and bring back news." <sup>19</sup> Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

<sup>20</sup> David rose up early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper, and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the place of the wagons as the army which was going out to the fight shouted for the battle. <sup>21</sup> Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army. <sup>22</sup> David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. <sup>23</sup> As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and said the same words; and David heard them. <sup>24</sup> All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were terrified. <sup>25</sup> The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? He has surely come up to defy Israel. The king will give great riches to the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter, and will make his father's house tax-free in Israel."

<sup>26</sup> David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

<sup>27</sup> The people answered him in this way, saying, "So shall it be done to the man who kills him."

<sup>28</sup> Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the evil of your heart; for you have come down that you might see the battle."

<sup>29</sup> David said, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" <sup>30</sup> He turned away from him toward another, and spoke like that again; and the people answered him again the same way. <sup>31</sup> When the words were heard which David spoke, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him. <sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

### **VERSES 17-21**

The Israelite and Philistine battle at Elah was not a normal battle. It was a standoff that had lasted 40 days. David's brothers had likely run out of food since food was sent with soldiers by their family. As the youngest son, David would have been the likely candidate to run family errands like this one though he still had responsibilities at home (shepherding). The ephah of parched grain was enough to feed about 100 men or one person for ten days. When combined with the 10 loaves and 10 cheeses, David carried about 50-60 pounds of food across 15-20 miles for his brothers and their captain to eat while at war.

### **VERSES 22-27**

Goliath appeared and repeated the same words he used before to taunt the Israelites, daring one of them to fight him in battle and declaring the war would end with whoever won that fight. David watched as the men fled from Goliath and asked them what the reward would be for killing Goliath. The Israelites around David explained Saul was offering riches and his daughter's hand in marriage for

killing the Philistine. David's response called out the soldiers' lack of faith in God.

### **VERSES 28-29**

Eliab responded to David's words with anger. He reminded David of his responsibilities as shepherd and challenged the reasons for David questioning the soldiers' response to Goliath's taunts. However, David replied with two questions that reinforced his earnest beliefs and determination.

### **VERSES 30-32**

David's words reached Saul who was already familiar with him. Saul sent for David and David appeared before him with the same confidence he showed the soldiers.

## **Life Application**

### **+ Everyone has a role in the fight for what's right.**

The Philistines lived on the coast but consistently tried to expand their territory inland where the Israelites lived. The Philistine-Israelite conflict had been going on for about 200 years. Despite being dispersed across different territories, the Israelites came together as one family to fight their shared enemy. That meant men of military service age, including David's three oldest brothers, went to fight. But even those who weren't called to fight had a role to play in the battle. Some made food, some carried the food to the frontline, and others organized supplies.

Every nation faces battles, whether they are within the country's borders or abroad. Sometimes we try to ignore national issues, especially when they seem distant from our physical location. But, if we're not careful, the enemy will continue to push their way into our territory. Therefore, we can't shy away from

engaging in national issues. When we see something that is unjust, we're called to stand up and defend what is right (Proverbs 31:8-9).

**+ Stressful situations can lead to wrong conclusions.**

Eliab had been on the frontlines of the fight for more than a month. It must have been stressful. Then one day his baby brother appears with questions that seem to criticize him for being afraid of the enemy. Eliab responded in anger believing David's intentions were evil.

Crises are stressful. Instead of seeing with our spiritual eyes, we often let our emotions cloud our judgement and respond in ways that don't align with God's plans. It's crucial we stay prayerful, especially during times of crisis, so that we maintain spiritual discernment and display the fruit of the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit can keep us from wrongfully accusing those who are trying to help us maintain our faith during our tests.

**+ Fresh perspectives can see victory instead of defeat.**

The Israelite soldiers feared Goliath. He appeared to be bigger, stronger, better equipped, and unafraid. He was introduced as the Philistine's strongest fighter and was so confident in his ability that he bet the entire battle on an individual fight between him and an Israelite. Facing an opponent of that stature paralyzed the Israelites, keeping them waiting on a hill to see what would happen instead of fighting the enemy. But David came to the battle with a fresh set of eyes and a faith that wasn't diminished by the sight and sound of the enemy.

Crises can overwhelm us to the point of indecision and inaction. Keeping our eyes on the enemy instead of our opportunity can halt our progress and delay our victory. Stakes are high in a crisis and that's when we

need our faith the most. Faith can keep us moving forward toward victory, trusting God with each step. So when our faith begins to waiver we can benefit from inviting a trusted Believer to help us see our situation with a fresh perspective, reminding us of what God can do.

## **Session Reflection**

- What's something happening nationally that makes you concerned for your family?
- Does your family share your concerns? Why or why not?
- When have your motives been misjudged?
- How have you overcome people's misconceptions of you to move forward in faith

