

DAVID: A MAN OF COURAGE AND STRENGTH

Courage and strength – and where we get it from – is a huge topic and in preparing this devotional I got quite overwhelmed. Where should I start?

Then I thought of David, one of my favourite people in the Bible. Maybe if we study him we can get a clue to where we ourselves could get courage and strength from.

- Can you relate to David in any way? How?

David had a huge amount of courage because he trusted that God was with him and would protect him. Look at the courage he had as a youth when he slew Goliath, the Philistine giant. Look at his attitude in 1 Samuel 17:32-36:

David said to Saul: Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

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."

But David 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 has defied the armies of the living God.

I like where he said "because [the Philistine] has defied the armies of the Living God." That to me looks like a clue to where his courage came from.

- Do you see the clue?

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. 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. (1 Samuel 17:45-46)

In his mind David thinks, "How dare they defy our God?" He was angry and, with God so much a part of whom he was, the anger gave him courage and strength.

Each of us has a Goliath in our life. Probably several. For those of us here, a mental health problem is one of them. It takes courage and strength to overcome it – to survive and thrive – to live a productive life. When our hearts and minds are set on God – when we trust Him – he will help us.

- Think of situations when God helped you and gave you courage and strength.

There's an amazing, not too familiar, story about David in 1 Samuel 30:

³ When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴ So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵ David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶ David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, ⁸ and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?"

"Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

Look at verse 6: *"But David found strength in the Lord his God."* It is the power and strength that comes from God that carries him on.

If you look up all the passages in your Bible dealing with strength – and there are so very many – you will be encouraged to note that it is not *your* strength that is needed but the strength that God supplies.

Trust that God will give you strength and you will receive it.

We've all read 2 Corinthians 12:9:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

In an adaptation to Charles Spurgeon's devotional *Morning and Evening*, he is quoted saying:

"A primary qualification for serving God with any amount of success, and for doing God's work well and triumphantly, is a sense of our own weakness. When God's warrior marches forth to battle, strong in his own might, when he boasts, "I know that I shall conquer, my own right arm and my conquering sword shall get unto me the victory!" — defeat is not far distant.

It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit", says the Lord of hosts."

Philippians 4:13 - I can do everything through him who gives me strength.