

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ are confident in their God-given identity (Eph. 2:10).

## SCRIPTURE

1 SAMUEL 17:4–11, 33, 41–47

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

A consistent foe for the nation of Israel was the Philistines, and there was probably no greater Philistine warrior than Goliath. He was so enormous and imposing that the mere sight of him caused soldiers to run and hide (v. 24). Instead of the entire Philistine and Israel armies going to battle, which would have brought about the loss of many people on both sides, Goliath threw out a challenge: he would fight Israel's best warrior, and the winner of that fight wins the war. The problem for Israel is that no one was willing to stand toe to toe with Goliath...until David heard the giant's defiance (v. 23).

Check out the **Teacher Prep Video** for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/1064810686>

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** We've giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.



## OPENING

### PRAYER

1–2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

**OPTIONAL:** Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.

### OPENING QUESTIONS

3–5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- What is a gift, talent, or ability you have always wanted to have?



## EXPLORE

### EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3–5 minutes

God has created everyone with specific gifts, talents, and abilities that are intended to be used for God's glory and the growth of his Kingdom. However, our sin often drives us to use them for ourselves—to build ourselves up to be the heroes, champions, or kings of our lives. The story of David and Goliath is the story of two people who used God's gifts in very different ways. The challenge for us is to follow David's example of trusting God's power through Him and giving God the glory versus following Goliath's example of trusting his own power and building his own "kingdom."

**Read 1 Samuel 17:4–11 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:**

7–10 minutes

- How has your life been impacted by someone else's gifts, talents, or abilities?

Answers will vary but may include help with understanding a school subject, providing guidance through a tough situation, listening when a friend is needed, etc. The impact someone else made in their life is the same impact they can make in someone else's life.

- How would you define what a spiritual gift is?

Spiritual gifts are God-given gifts to each of his children that help build up the church. Read 1 Corinthians 12:27–30 and Romans 12:4–8.

- Why do you think we sometimes use our God-given gifts for ourselves instead of God's Kingdom?

Our world tells us daily that we are the center of our stories and that it's up to us to fight for and take what we can because no one else will do it for us. Because of our sin nature, our natural desire is to lift ourselves up.



*Say something like:* God has created us with unique gifts, talents, and abilities. But like Goliath, we can be guilty of using our gifts for ourselves instead of for God.

**Read 1 Samuel 17:33 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:**

7–10 minutes

- Why do you think Israel was so afraid of Goliath? And what kind of Goliaths are in your life?

Israel saw Goliath's size, strength, and experience as an obstacle too big for them to overcome. They didn't seek God's help, but David did, and it made all the difference. Help your students think about obstacles in their lives that they also think are too big to overcome and remind them that God wants to help.

- Share a story of when people doubted you, like Israel doubted David.

Come prepared to share a personal story, but help your group connect the lies and doubts people told David with how God worked his power through you.

- David ultimately trusted God, and God rescued Israel. Can you share a story of a time when you trusted God, and he came through?

Come prepared to share a personal story to help get the conversation started, and remind your group that the God who rescued Israel is the same one who rescues us.



*Say something like:* Sometimes we feel defeated and cannot overcome the Goliaths in our lives. But David set an example that we can overcome when our trust is in God's power and our identity is firmly rooted in Jesus.

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

**Read 1 Samuel 17:45–47 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:**

7–10 minutes

- How do we make sure we are more like David than Goliath?

Two big differences between the two: David used his gifts for God's glory and Goliath used his gifts to glorify himself. David's confidence was in what God could do, while Goliath's confidence was in what he could do on his own.

- If Jesus is our source of power and intended to be the center of our lives, how can you keep him at the center?

Answers will vary but might include: spending time with God through prayer and reading his Word, trusting his ways over our own, etc.



*Say something like:* The question to ask is: Are we currently like David or like Goliath? To be a disciple of Jesus is to be like David. We are called to place Jesus at the center of our lives and, trust in his power and strength, and build his kingdom. It's all about God, not us!



## CONNECT &amp; APPLY

## CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

*Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how you used your gifts, talents, or abilities to build God's Kingdom.*

*Example:* Bailey was asked to share how she came to know Jesus and her faith journey at church one week. The problem was that she was terrified of public speaking. She had always been told she was too shy and quiet, and the one time she had to speak at school in front of her class, her teacher laughed at her. But she knew this opportunity was important. She spent time praying that God would use her words to encourage others. Bailey stood up and spoke, and yes, she made some mistakes, but when it was over, a girl came up to her crying. She said it was as if God was speaking through Bailey right to her. At that moment, all Bailey's fears and worries were gone because she knew God gave her the power she needed and the right words to speak. God got the glory from Bailey's willingness to share her story!



- How can you use a God-given gift, talent, or ability to impact your world for Jesus this week?  
Help your students be specific. If you can, it would be powerfully impactful to identify a gift, talent, or ability you see in each of them to spark ideas and conversations.

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ are confident in their God-given identity (Eph. 2:10).

*Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.*

## APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

How can you ensure you are working to build God's Kingdom this week instead of your own?

*Be specific:*

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



## CLOSING

## PRAYER

2–3 minutes

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Spend some time praying that God will give every student an opportunity this week to give glory to Jesus with one of their gifts, talents, or abilities.

*Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

## MEMORY VERSE

*Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.*

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

John 3:30 (ESV)

## NOTES

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