

# HOW TO TAKE DOWN THE GIANT

1 SAMUEL 17:32-37;  
48-49 NRSVUE

*A Sermon BY  
Dr. Thema Bryant*

OCTOBER  
13TH

11AM

World Mental Health  
Day Service





**Date & Service**     October 13, 2024, 11:00 am  
**Preacher:**             Dr. Thema Bryant  
**Sermon Title:**        *How to Take Down the Giant*  
**Scripture:**             1 Samuel 17: 32-37; 48-49 NRSVUE

32 David said to Saul, “Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” 33 Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” 34 But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father, and whenever a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth, and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37 David said, “The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.” So Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you!”

48 When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

## **SERMON SUMMARY**

On this World Mental Health Sunday, Dr. Thema Bryant uses the story of David and Goliath from 1 Samuel 17: 32-37, 48-49 to illustrate how we can take down the "giants" in our lives. She begins her sermon by acknowledging the different seasons we experience, noting that some are more challenging than others. In particular, she highlights the current socio-political climate, which leaves many Americans feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. In this difficult season filled with diverse and oppressing giants, Dr. Bryant uses David's story to teach us how to confront and overcome them.

She explains that King David comes from a lineage of giant slayers. Just as we inherit ancestral wounds, we also inherit ancestral wisdom. Caleb, an ancestor of David, defeated three giants, establishing a legacy of courage in David's bloodline. Dr. Bryant emphasizes that even if we don't see this strength in our immediate family, if we trace our lineage far enough, we'll find someone who conquered their giants. Whether you're the first in your family to face certain challenges or not, Dr. Bryant reminds us that as children of God, we each hold giant-slayer strength within us.

Dr. Bryant then outlines five anchoring points for defeating giants:

**1. Settle Your Spirit**

- a. David, known for his prowess in battle, was also a shepherd and musician. He understood there was more to his identity than just being a fighter.
- b. To defeat our giants, we need to calm our spirits so we do not mistake the nonsense and distractions as giants.

**2. See Yourself Through God's Eyes**

- a. David didn't let others, like his father or King Saul, define him as just a delivery boy. He saw himself as God saw him, which was as a giant-slaying warrior.
- b. To defeat our giants, we must hold firm to our God-given identity and not let others shake us out of those identities.

**3. Practice and Prepare**

- a. Don't despise small beginnings. Where God has you now is preparing you for the giants you'll face tomorrow.
- b. Pray for readiness, asking, "Lord, make me ready."

**4. Have Faith in God**

- a. David's faith led him to step up when others wouldn't and to run fearlessly into battle.
- b. We, too, must stop hiding from our callings and face the giants that threaten us, whether it's bullying or other challenges.

**5. Be Strategic in Armor and Aim**

- a. David refused to wear Saul's armor because it didn't fit. He used his sling strategically, aiming for Goliath's head.
- b. Likewise, we need to walk our own path, not imitating others, and aim for the heart of our problems, not the surface.

Dr. Bryant concludes her sermon by offering encouragement to those who have already faced giants and those who are weary from fighting. If you've conquered spiritual, emotional, psychological, or educational giants, she reminds us that it's our responsibility to teach others how to defeat theirs, reminding them of who they are and the power God has placed within them.

## **KEY POINTS**

1. David was not the first in his family to slay giants. He came from a lineage of giant-slayers.
2. If you focus on fighting (slaying) foolishness, gossip, and rumors, you will have no energy or strength left to address the real giants that torment our communities.
3. It is time to get clear about who you are and recognize that your trauma may affect you but it does not have to define you.
4. Do not allow the opinions of others to shake you from the truth of your identity in God.
5. Womanist psychology encourages us to embrace the concept “self-determination,” which requires us to get clear about who we are.
6. Imposter syndrome is rooted in a deep desire to be acceptable. Stop trying to be acceptable and instead commit to becoming an infiltrator.
7. Where you are right now is preparing you to face and conquer tomorrow’s giants.
8. Take wisdom, take mentorship, take guidance but then put it through the filter of your own spirit, your own experience, through your own identity.
9. When taking down the giant, stop aiming for metaphorical elbows and knees and aim for the head, the root of it.

## **GETTING TO KNOW YOU QUESTIONS**

1. As you think about your ancestors and the wisdom they’ve passed down, who has impacted you and how do you live out their wisdom?

2. Dr. Bryant's mother's description of our society as having "prayerlessness" was relatable. What practices do you find help keep you connected to prayer in this busy world?

## **INTO THE BIBLE QUESTIONS**

1. Dr. Bryant referencing [Ephesians 6:12](#) is a powerful reminder of how our struggles aren't just against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces. When you reflect on this in relation to mental health as Christians, how does this passage impact your understanding of mental health?
2. Dr. Bryant reflects on David's battle with giants in [2 Samuel 21](#) to provide encouragement on how to handle our personal giants. What part of David's battles resonate with you when it comes to your own struggles?

## **LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Dr. Bryant emphasizes the importance of calming our spirits to discern true giants from distractions. In today's fast-paced, often overwhelming world, what are some practical ways we can settle our spirits?

2. In her sermon, Dr. Bryant quoted a Scottish theologian who said, “Everyone else thought ‘Goliath is so big, I can’t beat him.’ David thought, ‘Goliath is so big, I can’t miss.’” How does this quote challenge us to reconsider how our perspective shapes our response to the giants in our lives? In what ways might our own fears, assumptions, ancestral wounds, or societal conditioning cause us to see our giants as insurmountable?
  
3. Dr. Bryant asserts that imposter syndrome is rooted in a deep “desire to be acceptable,” and she encourages us to stop trying to be acceptable and instead commit to infiltrating. How does imposter syndrome attempt to shake us out of the truth of our God-given identity? How can adopting the mindset of an infiltrator empower us to live authentically and boldly pursue our callings despite societal expectations and pressures?
  
4. David didn’t let others, like his father or King Saul, define him as just a delivery boy. He saw himself as God saw him, which was as a giant-slaying warrior. How might a deep sense of self-determination aid you in resisting the opinions of others concerning your worth and purpose?
  
5. Dr. Bryant speaks of “ancestral wisdom” and the legacy of courage that runs through David’s bloodline. How does acknowledging our own ancestral history empower us to face today’s giants? How can we draw strength from the struggles and victories of our ancestors, even if we don’t see the strength in our immediate family?

6. Dr. Bryant noted that many of us, shaped by trauma, conflict, and scarcity, were raised as warriors. However, our identity must be more than just fighting. How can we begin to embrace an identity beyond one that is formed by trauma?

### ***“CAN I PUSH IT?”* QUESTIONS**

1. Reflect on the giants in our current society, such as systemic racism, inequality, voter suppression, or political oppression. How can we, as individuals and as a church, draw from our faith and ancestral wisdom to confront these challenges?
  
2. As we recognize World Mental Health Sunday, in what ways has the Black church not supported mental health? Has the Black church learned how to support the mental health issues plaguing our communities?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

1. If you are among a marginalized group, either because of your race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, etc., what steps can you take (or have you already begun to take) to embrace your God-given identity in a world that often denies it?

2. Have you experienced a time where you mistakenly thought a small stressor was your giant? If so, how did that experience impact you and those around you? Please share your experience with your village family.
  
3. Dr. Bryant warns us to not let foolishness and petty things distract us from the true giant. What are some tools you implore to quickly move past the distractions and keep your eyes on the giant?
  
4. The sermon instructs us to not hide our voices and anointing. Is there a time when you hid instead of making your voice heard and anointing known? What benefits and costs did you experience? How can you encourage yourself and others to not hide and live boldly?

### ***INDIVIDUAL OR VILLAGE STUDY***

#### **SPIRIT WORK/ACTIVITY**

The sermon teaches us that we must settle our spirits to take down what God has for us. In your quiet time this week, ask God to reveal to you the things in your life that you need to settle (e.g. rage, stress, panic, anxiety, physical health) so that when the giant appears, you will not be exhausted but rather prepared to take down the giant. Choose an area of focus and prayerfully develop and record a plan to settle that thing. Refer back to your plan throughout the week and update if necessary as God leads you to settlement.



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Definition:

[Imposter Syndrome](#)

Videos

The Bible Project: [1 Samuel Overview](#)