



Discussion Guide

Date: 6/28/2026

Sermon Title: Can my weaknesses be strengths?

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, you are the source of our strength and the giver of every good gift. Too often we compare ourselves to others, focus on what we lack, and allow fear to define us. Open our hearts as we study your Word today. Help us to see ourselves as you see us—not through the lens of weakness, but through the lens of your grace and purpose. Guide our conversation, deepen our understanding, and transform our lives through the power of your Holy Spirit, Amen.

OPENING QUESTIONS: (Choose one to start with)

1. Share about a time when you felt unqualified, inexperienced, or "too small" for a challenge. What happened?
2. Share about a time when you felt like an "underdog" in a situation. What was the outcome? How did it feel?

SETTING THE SCENE:

The story of David and Goliath is one of the most familiar stories in Scripture. Yet it is far more than a tale about courage. It is a story about identity, trust, vocation, and God's surprising ways of working through people whom others overlook. Everyone around David saw limitations that he was too young. Inexperienced and small. He was not a trained soldier; yet David trusted that God had already been preparing him through experiences others considered insignificant. The turning point may not be David picking up the stones; it may be David taking off Saul's armor.

DIGGING INTO 1 Samuel 17: Read this text 1 Samuel 17:1-50. If time is limited, focus on 1 Samuel 17:32-40; 45-50 and use questions for conversation or reflection.

1. What do you notice? What details stand out to you in this reading?
2. What surprises you about David's response to Goliath?
3. What emotions seem to be present among Saul, the soldiers, and David?

Read 1 Samuel 17:24 "All the Israelites, when they saw the man, fled from him and were very much afraid."

1. What fears were controlling Israel?

2. How does fear distort the way we see problems?
3. What fears commonly affect people today?
4. How does fear differ from wisdom or caution?

Read 1 Samuel 17:38-40 Saul attempts to equip David with armor designed for a king and warrior. David cannot move comfortably and removes it.

1. Why do you think David chose to remove the armor?
2. What does Saul's armor symbolize?
3. Have you ever felt pressure to become someone you are not?
4. Why is it difficult to trust the gifts God has uniquely given us? What "armor" are you carrying that God never asked you to wear?

Read 1 Samuel 17:33 "You are not able to go against this Philistine..."

Read 1 Samuel 16:7 "The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

1. What did others see when they looked at David? What did God see?
2. Why does God often choose unlikely people in Scripture?

David's size and lack of military training appeared to be disadvantages. Yet they became an advantage. David fought differently than Goliath expected. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

1. How does Paul's understanding of weakness connect to David's story?
2. What weaknesses have become strengths in your own life?
3. What gifts have emerged from challenges or hardships?
4. How might God be working through areas where you feel inadequate?

Read 1 Samuel 17:34-37. David remembers God's faithfulness through previous challenges with lions and bears.

1. Why is remembering God's faithfulness important when facing new challenges?
2. What past experiences strengthened David's trust?
3. How has God prepared you through previous seasons of life?
4. Share one "lion or bear" experience from your life—a challenge God helped you overcome. How does that experience strengthen your faith today?

WESLEYAN CONNECTION:

John Wesley believed that God's grace is always at work before we recognize it. What Wesley called prevenient grace means God is already preparing and equipping us before we arrive at life's challenges. David did not suddenly become brave in front of Goliath. God had been shaping him in the fields through his work as a shepherd and his ordinary acts of faithfulness. Through experiences that seemed unimportant at the time. Wesley often taught that God forms disciples through daily habits of faith and obedience rather than dramatic moments alone.

1. How might God have been preparing David long before this battle?
2. How might God be preparing you right now for something you cannot yet see?
3. What ordinary experiences in your life have become important spiritual lessons?



SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. David and Goliath is a classic greatest hit story of the underdog. In what areas of your life do you feel like an underdog facing an overwhelming giant, and how might God be calling you to show up despite your fear?
2. The sermon talks about battles in life that we all face. What "giant" are you currently facing in your life? (This could be a health issue, financial stress, relationship problem, addiction, etc.)
3. The Israelite army was paralyzed by fear while David saw an opportunity to trust God. Have you ever been paralyzed by fear like the Israelite army? What kept you from "showing up" to face your challenge?
4. David refused to wear Saul's armor and instead fought with his shepherd's tools was the way he suited up. When have you tried to use someone else's gifts or methods instead of embracing the unique way God has equipped you?
5. David took aim and ran toward the battle line while others were paralyzed by fear. What battle or difficult situation have you been avoiding that God might be calling you to run toward?

FINAL REFLECTIONS:

1. What does this story about David reveal about God's perspective on qualifications versus character?
2. Pastor Clayton shared how he struggled to preach like his father or mentors before learning to use his own gifts. Who have you been trying to imitate instead of becoming who God created you to be?
3. The sermon emphasizes taking dead aim at loving like Jesus. What practical steps can you take this week to aim more intentionally at reflecting Christ's love in your daily life?
4. What unique gifts, experiences, or perspectives has God given you that you might be overlooking? How could these help you face your current challenges?
5. David was furious when Goliath insulted God, which motivated him to action. What injustices or challenges stir righteous anger in you that might be God's call to take action?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Faithful God, thank you for the reminder that your power is not limited by our weaknesses. When we feel inadequate, remind us that you are sufficient. When we compare ourselves to others, remind us that you have uniquely created and gifted each of us. When fear threatens to overwhelm us, help us remember your faithfulness in the past and your presence with us today. Like David, give us the courage to trust you more than our fears. Help us lay down the armor that does not belong to us and embrace the gifts, experiences, and calling you have placed within us. Use our lives to reflect your grace, your strength, and your love in the world. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND:

Choose ONE of the following practices to focus on this week:

1. Show Up by identifying one situation you've been avoiding because of fear or feeling overwhelmed. Take one concrete step toward facing it this week. Share your experience with one trusted person.
2. Suit Up (Your Way) by making a list of 3-5 unique gifts, skills, or experiences God has given you. Identify one current challenge and brainstorm how YOUR specific gifts could address it. Stop comparing yourself to someone else in at least one area.
3. Take Dead Aim and write down what you're "aiming for" in your spiritual life. Identify one specific way you can "run toward the battle line" rather than away from it. Choose one area where you'll pursue loving like Jesus this week.