

Dealing With Bullies

1 Samuel 17:1-11 Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them. A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him. Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

1 Samuel 17:45-47 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. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give all of you into our hands."

1 Samuel 24:12-13 May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you.

2 Corinthians 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

Bullies can be found in school, where you work, and even at home. They usually frighten us with their size, assumed authority, or some other advantage.

Goliath was a giant. He bullied all of the Israelite army. He mocked them day after day.

David was a young shepherd. He wasn't even really supposed to be there. He went out to fight Goliath. Was he brave or stupid?

What was David's reason, in 1 Samuel 17:45-47, for thinking he could possibly win?

What if he hadn't won?

I'm not suggesting that we respond to bullies by hitting them on the head with a rock. We can, however, remember that **our strength is not from ourselves**.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Beside tapping into God's Spirit of boldness and power, 2 Timothy 1:7 say we must also apply the traits of: _____ and _____.

Dealing with angry people displays our Christian faith. People are watching. We can lose our tempers or **we can respond calmly and with love**.

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Even though Saul chased David all over the country, and David had chances to kill Saul, he didn't. Why not (1 Samuel 24:12-13)?

At times it is better to run from the bully. This is not cowardice. It is wisdom. Trusting God to exact justice in His way takes great faith.

We can't control difficult people but **we can decide who we get advice from**. From the verse below, how does the Bible suggest we decide whom not to choose as advisors?

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

What kind of people should we choose as friends?

We can decide who we are going to be and how we will act.

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

2 Corinthians 1:12 recommends that we follow our _____ guided by _____ grace shown to us. We should not be guided by _____ wisdom.

Verses are from The New International Version unless otherwise noted.

Lesson Plan: Dealing With Bullies

Allow 45 minutes for teaching time.

The Goal:

The goal of this lesson is to teach the kids to respond to bullies in a way consistent with Biblical principles and godly wisdom. This lesson makes a good follow-up lesson to “Bullies Of The Bible.”

Preparing to teach the lesson:

Read the entire story of David and Goliath in your Bible.

Visit this web link from Jack Zavada for a lot of great advice: <http://christianity.about.com/od/topicalbiblestudies/a/difficultpeople.htm>

Leading the lesson:

Read the story of David and Goliath to the kids. Use a giants voice when reading Goliath’s’ taunt. Depending on your kids Biblical knowledge you might have to give them a quick paraphrase of the entire David and Goliath story. Note: In today’s measurements Goliath’s sword tip weighed close to twenty pounds and his armor weighed in at about a hundred and fifty pounds. Also point out that Goliath mocked Israel’s army for forty days straight. Goliath was a really big bully.

Asked the questions printed in blue. There are no wrong answers. Point out that David believed God would fight this giant and he stated his belief for all to hear. David “strengthened himself in the Lord.” (1 Samuel 30:6) Have them fill in the blanks after reading 2 Timothy 1:7. We can apply the traits of *love* and *self discipline* when we tap into God’s strength.

Another bully was King Saul. David had many chances to kill Saul but didn’t because he knew Saul was God’s chosen king at the time.

The main points they should learn are printed in green:

1. Our strength is not from ourselves. It comes from God’s Spirit in us.
2. We can respond calmly and with love if we see the bully the way God sees them.
3. It’s better to avoid confrontation rather than seek revenge.
4. We should choose whom we seek advice from wisely (make yourself available).
5. We can’t control a bully but we can control how we respond.

Keeping in mind God’s forgiveness of our misdeeds (grace) helps us view the bully in a gentler light. It’s not always easy to be gentle. Sometimes we get angry and selfish. God can change our hearts so we can try to understand the bullies motives. We might then be able to respond with more wisdom.

Close with Prayer:

Ask the kids for prayer requests. Note the kids who exhibit signs of being bullied. Make a point to have private follow-up conversations with them.