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February 19, 2017

1 SAMUEL 17:1-30

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you now and settle our hearts before you. We ask that you would use your word now to speak to us. We know that this isn't just an ordinary book, and some people would consider this story a fable. But we know that it's a story that's in your word and that it's a true story. Out of it we can take truths and principles and apply to our lives now. Lord, we want to take Jesus home out of this place today. In order to do that, we have to dig into your word and understand what it says and then apply it to our lives. So I ask, Lord, that you teach us how to face the battlefield in each of our lives, whether we're students, whether we're a home, whether we're on the job somewhere. We ask that you would speak to each one of us and help us to be more godly, to live the lives you've called us to live, to face the giants that we have in our own lives today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Turn in your Bibles with me to 1 Samuel 17. I know that many of you have been looking forward to this study for a long time. This is probably one of the most famous Bible stories out there, David and Goliath. We're going to look at this lesson today. But there's the spoiler now (cover your ears if you don't want to hear it), the guy dies in the end. The giant, we're going to kill him, He's going to be dead. Maybe not this week, but next week we're going to kill him. So he's going to be out of here. He's going down. The week after that we're going to cut off his head. That's total victory. We'll get to that.

I should apologize for some of the violence we're going to see here, but that's part of the story. The reality is life is bloody sometimes. In our own lives we face difficult situations, challenges. We're all facing challenges in our lives. We're going to look at what the battlefield looks like, what the tactics of the enemy are and we're going to look at what David did.

You think about this young man who reaches down and finds these five smooth stones. He grabs those up because he's a man of possibilities. He understands it. Here's a blown up version of one little stone. I just think he looked down there and said *with God all things are possible*. That's Matthew 19:26. *With God all things are possible*. This isn't just a story about a guy in the Old Testament who fights this huge guy and wins. It's something that's very important for every one of us in our own lives. *With God all things are possible*.

So for a moment I want to talk to those people who have given up, who feel like they're at the end of their rope, who feel like this is too big of a battle, this is too hard to address. Because in this story God will revive your hope because it is never too late. There is always the opportunity to move forward and God wants to do some amazing things.

Every one of us will face giants in our lives. The question isn't if we'll face the giants. The question is when the giants are there, will we be ready for them. There are things that we can do to prepare ourselves for the giants in our lives.

But it's not just for you; this is for other people too. You will come into contact with people who are really struggling. They're facing major challenges. They're overwhelmed. That word 'overwhelmed' describes how some people feel. They're just overwhelmed with life, and they need hope. They need a giant-killer to come in and you have the solutions that are there.

Incidentally I want you to see in the passage that David doesn't know that he's going to kill a giant on this day. He doesn't know that. He gets up, today is just one of these ordinary days where he's doing an errand out to the battlefield to find out how things are going. He doesn't know how he's going to kill a giant. That's why it's so important for us to be ready. You have to have your heart tuned to the Lord all the time because you never know when the giant will appear. That's why it's important to come to church. The things that you learn will remind you of the truths that you need to face the challenges. You don't know what the rest of this day is going to encounter. Today may be the day that some giant appears in your life. But I know some of you are facing the giants right now. Are you ready to kill some giants?

Let's look at the passage, 1 Samuel 17 starting in verse 1. It says – *Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh 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.*

If we look at a modern picture today of the Valley of Elah, you can see that Saul's camp was over on this hill and then over on the other hill in the background there is the Philistine camp at Ephes Dammim and the valley is in between. There's a creek that runs through there where you might find some stones. There's a valley, the long valley in there, and it's the typical way that they would engage in battle in those days. You would want to be on a high point because the high point would give you advantage over your enemy approaching you. You'd be taller than them and then you could have an advantage over them. So neither of the armies wanted to go up the other side. But the valley was this place where this battle is going to take place.

They would do things like yell or scream, or in this case send this giant out there to make some comments and yell at them. All designed to instill fear in other people. That fear is a typical thing that happens on the battlefield and happens in our own lives too. No matter how long you've been a Christian, no matter how strong you are in your faith, you will face giants in your life. You will face opposition. You could be the sweetest, gentlest, kindest person in the world and there's going to be somebody who doesn't like you. Maybe just because you're so sweet and nice. They don't like you for whatever reason. That's one kind of opposition.

Then there's another kind of opposition where there's some people who don't like anybody and you just happen to be in the way. He's not your problem. You don't have to take it personally. They just don't like anybody. And you're there, so you're in the way of them. So that can be the opposition.

It could be that the opposition is just the fact that our world is a crippled place. Crippled by sin, broken world, and bad things happen. It may be that you didn't do anything, but you find yourself faced with this opposition that you're going to do something about.

That's what David is doing. He wasn't involved in this problem. It wasn't his problem. He didn't cause the problem. He didn't do anything wrong that got him involved in this opposition. It was just there. There are times in our lives when problems happen and they're there. They're right there. Somebody has got to do something about them. This is David. He's going to step into this situation that he doesn't even realize, so we've seen now the battlefield, what it looks like.

The next thing we're going to do is we're going to see what this Goliath, this giant, is all about. Look at verse 4. *A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.*

In order to understand biblical terminology and measurements, we have to know some things. Like if you're reading through the Bible with us right now in the book of Numbers, as we go through Leviticus, you're reading about the sacrifices. There's a hin, a measure of oil. A hin of oil. An ephah of flour. Those are measurements. There's a furlong of distance and a day's journey is a distance. In this case we're talking about a length and the length is a cubit.

Now a cubit is the distance from your elbow to your middle finger. Find somebody next to you. Put your elbow, middle finger, what do you have here. Put it up there and see who's biggest. We were doing this at the prayer meeting. What do we have? I'm 17 ½ inches. A typical cubit is 18 inches. I'm 17 ½. I put my arm up to Frank this morning. He was at least an inch higher than me. Right, Frank? But then we got the giant in our group here, Tim Brown. His cubit is way up here. It must be 21 inches or something.

That could be really handy if you owe somebody something and you're like this is my assistant with the little cubit, she's going to pay you back; and if you want to go buy something, you want to get a good deal, you say I'm going to have Tim Brown come with me. He'll be my assistant. We'll get his cubit of things.

A typical cubit is generally 18 inches. If you calculate that, that means that's six feet. The cubit is 18 inches long.

The span is this distance from your thumb to your finger. Mine is 9 inches. Some of you can hold a basketball. You much be larger than nine. But mine is 9. So this means that this guy is about 9 feet 9 inches tall. That's pretty big.

In fact, to help you get an idea of how big he was, I'm going to show you a picture. Now this picture was taken by Marie a couple years ago because Marie, Joanne, and I went to the Children's Pastors Conference. While we were there, Joanne and I speak, Marie is there because she runs our children's ministry. She's looking for ideas for our children's ministry to equip our kids. So while we were there, we came across this one display and we took a picture of Goliath

and how big he is. This is me standing almost 6 foot tall (5 feet 9 inches I guess I am) and this is Goliath who was 9 feet 9 inches. The guy was big. He's a really big guy.

Our goliaths today don't carry swords and shields. They carry weapons like loneliness, unemployment, health problems, family problems, worry, and they are big. They seem insurmountable. They're hard for us to address because they're so big. They're painful for us even to look at because of their hugeness. Now our giants don't parade around and prance around on the hills of Elah, like this guy does. They're close and personal, like in the classroom or in the office or in the home. They're the wrestling that we do inside of our hearts as we face things. They're things like bills we can't pay, or grades or scores we can't make, or people we can't please, or drinks we can't resist, a past we can't escape, a future we can't face.

When we see that Goliath, is that all we see? David saw more than just the Goliath on the battlefield. He saw more than that. We need to broaden our perspective today. We need to see more than the giant that's out there in front of us because God wants to slay those giants.

What is a giant? A giant is anything that stands between me and the plans of God for my life. What is the giant? The giant seems bigger than anything else around. What is a giant? A giant is stronger than us to fight alone. That's why it is so important for us to have the spiritual strength that God provides in our lives. This guy is big. That's the point here. We have to understand that if we're going to face the challenges of our own lives, recognize that they are big. It's okay if they are big. God's bigger than the bigness of the giant that's out there.

Well the bigness continues in verse 5. It says – *He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels.* Five thousand shekels is about 125 pounds. It's another weight that you'll want to know from biblical times. The scale armor means that he has little scales that are all fastened together so that he can move around. But if a weapon or something were to hit him, it would not penetrate. So he had this scale armor. This is the original under armour that he had on.

On his legs he wore bronze greaves (these are on his shins, the shin coverings to protect his legs), *and a bronze javelin* (this was a short-range tool that was thin that could pierce armor or he could use in short range). And then there was this *spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels* (fifteen pounds). So this was short-range weapon that he could hit someone with, it could knock them over, it would pierce their armor, it would kill them, or whatever. *His shield bearer went ahead of him.* So again, the picture is this guy is really big. He's heavy. He's weighty.

Goliath for you may be a habit. It may be bitterness. It may be an unsettled matter. It might be a problem from the past. Or it may be looking at the future. It may be a difficult moral decision that you're wrestling with. Here's what people often struggle with. They say if I change or if I try to fight this battle, I'm going to have to change my life, and that change is going to be too hard for me. Too hard for me to lose that weight. Too hard for me to deal with this relationship. I'm going to have to change too much. That battle then is fought on the inside. We must make some understanding. We must have some understanding of who God is and how God wants to equip us to fight the battle in our lives.

Goliath. Verse 8 – *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 armies 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.*

The problem with giants is that they steal our peace in our lives. They rob us from the plans that God has for us and the direction He wants us to go. Just think this week if you’re reading through our passages every day (and you can pick up anytime – I encourage you to read through the Bible with us), Numbers was this week. In Numbers 13-14 you’ve got that passage where the Israelites were sent into the Promised Land to spy out the land. Do you remember what happened? They came back and said, “There are giants in the land!” It’s those giants that rob us of peace that prevent us from going in and accomplishing what God would have for us.

Giants stop the progress of God’s people. Just think of what’s in your way right now that’s preventing you from moving forward. That is a giant. That could be life. Life itself is a giant. So in the passage he’s showing us how to address some of these challenges on the battlefield.

Verse 12 – *Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul’s time he was very old. Jesse’s three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.*

David’s primary job was that he worked in the family business. But he had this gig that he worked, playing his guitar or lyre over in the king’s palace, that he did every Monday night or whatever it might be. He’s out there playing his instrument. That’s David.

Look at this, verse 16. I’ve just got to pause here for a moment. *For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.* Every morning, every evening for forty days. Don’t you feel like that? It just continues on and on. Forty days is a long time. Forty days is a long time to try to change something in our life or to do something. Every day he’s getting attacked in the morning, he’s getting attacked in the evening. Every day, twice a day. He’s coming out in the morning, coming out in the evening. Every day if you’re facing a battle, you’re thinking about in the morning, you’re thinking about it in the evening, you’re bothered by it, it’s troubling you, it’s upsetting you that you’ve got to deal with this. “I can’t believe I have to deal with this. I can’t believe this is what I signed up for. I can’t believe this is happening again.” All of this back and forth. It’s hard to face giants.

Francis Schaeffer’s wife named Edith Schaeffer was asked the question one day, “What’s the hardest thing about being a Christian?” I like her answer. She said it’s so daily. It’s so daily. Every day we’re facing the challenges of life, we’re addressing them in ways that God would have us do.

Here's a big guy getting in the way of progress for the Israelites, taking away their peace in the same way that those things happen in our own lives. We get angry. Just think about the things that upset you or the things that are distressing you. Those are the battlefields of life, the challenges that you face, that I face in our lives.

Now we're on the battlefield here. That's the scene. We're going to switch scenes. We're going to take another scene. We're going to go flash over to the scene in David's house. Because he's not on the battlefield yet. He's back there at home. As we're on verse 17 we're in a new scene of the same story.

In verse 17 it says – *Now Jesse said to his son David, “Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines.”*

Now I think David that day just believed that he was going to deliver cheese. Cheese deliveryman. That's what he's doing. He's delivering the cheese, the bread, the roasted flour so that people could have some cheese sandwiches out at the battlefield. He had no idea what was going to happen.

We already talked about how David was a responsible guy. He was a hero in the small things of life. Giants do not make or break us. They only reveal who we are. If we can be heroes in the small things then we are ready for the bigger things that come along. They're going to come along. The things you're facing right now are very important to address because as you're addressing them, you're building the perseverance, you're building the self-discipline, you're building the peace of mind in the midst of struggle. Right now in your life you're dealing with the ability to handle disappointment, frustration, challenges, feeling overwhelmed. You're dealing with that now so that when the next thing comes along, get ready for it.

That's what happened to David. He did not become a hero on that day when he fought Goliath. He was already practicing to be a hero long before that. It was the giant who exposed him as the hero. He had already been building those qualities in his life.

Giants simply show who we are. You can call them giants, you can call them storms, you can call them trials in your life. We all face them in our lives. We need to know how to deal with them. Victories are won in the training room, not on the battlefield. At least they're won first in the training room before they're on the battlefield. In this case they were won in the pasture, they were won playing his musical instrument, they were won practicing his sling. He'd done all of that before he meets the giant. All of that was ready to go, so he was prepared to fight the giant.

You can view your life right now as a training ground. Right now the things you're facing are things you want to be working out. It's like we're going into the weight room and trying to work out. You see those weights that are over there. You've got to pick them up and you've got to move them in order to get stronger. The things you see in your life right now are a challenge. That person that's obnoxious that you've got to deal with. That other person that's over here.

That other problem you've got going on in your heart are all those things. You're lifting weights and becoming stronger on the inside.

1 Corinthians 9:25 says this: *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

Right now we are working through the things that prepare us for the battle. David was working through those things. Now he's being sent on a mission with ten cheeses, ten loaves of bread, and some roasted grain out to the battlefield to check on things and how they're going.

Verse 20 picks up the story by saying this: *Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear.*

So David's on the battlefield now, he's gathering the information he's supposed to gather. In the midst of that, Goliath comes on and makes his presentation and David sees that.

Verse 25 – *Now the Israelites had been saying, “Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel.”*

That's a pretty big reward for the person who's going to go out there and kill this giant. He's going to get great wealth, he's going to get this daughter in marriage (she must have been some daughter to be put up as a prize), and be exempted from taxes in Israel.

Verse 26 – *David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”*

They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, “This is what will be done for the man who kills him.”

Now as we come to this part of the story we're now going to see in the rest of the passage three different attacks that take place in David's life. Each one of them leaves us with a principle we can take home and put into practice in our own lives.

Today we're only going to look at one because we're going to now take the play in slow motion. I love it when they do the football plays and they review them. You're watching the play in slow motion because you can actually see how a fumble took place, or the interception took place, or the penalty happened, or he grabbed his facemask. I like it when they do it in slow motion

because you get to see the different pieces as they're taking place. That's what we're going to do now. So slow it all down as we go to the next part. We're going to see three attacks. One this week, and then you've got to come back next week for the rest of the story.

So this is attack number one starting in verse 28. *When Eliab, David's oldest brother...* Now I just have to stop there because I want you to see that the first attack comes from his own family. Even hero families are dysfunctional. There is no perfect family. Every family has problems. This problem, this attack is going to come from within the family.

Don't you experience that sometimes? You're trying to fight the battle and here's someone over here speaking in your ear and the attack is coming from the side and you're not ready for that. You've got to know that happens in our lives. Sometimes it's those people closest to you that are attacking and it's a problem and you're trying to face life.

Back to 28 – *When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."*

Attack number one. Accusing. Accusations. You know those things. Those things that when we tend to feel misunderstood, someone attacks us with things that aren't true. We know that they're not true.

"You're not being responsible. In fact, when you are, you just have those few sheep out there. That's nothing that you have to do. We're out there fighting the battle. You only got these little sheep to take care of." He's accusing him. Notice he says, *"How conceited you are. I know your heart, how wicked it is."*

It's always dangerous to imply malice to someone else's heart. "She must not love me. If she loved me she wouldn't cook the eggs that way." "He must not love me. If he loved me, he wouldn't leave his dirty dishes in the living room." So we imply malice. They're doing it on purpose. He's got to be doing it on purpose to me. She's got to be doing it on purpose to me. So we start thinking that way and we imply malice. That's what Eliab is doing to David. He's attacking him.

In the Bible Satan has a name. He's called the Accuser. He's the one who attacks us. He attacks us and accuses us of all kinds of things in our lives. He wants to shame us. You've got to understand, God will never shame you. God will point out your sin. He'll point out your sin in a way that will prompt you to move forward.

There's a difference between guilt and shame. We sang that song. That's why I threw that song in there. Although you don't really get the songs before the sermon, but we still sing them anyway and then I talk about them afterwards. There's a battle going on in your heart between shame and grace.

Shame comes from the Accuser who wants to attack us. God wants to provide us with that grace in our lives. Now we do experience guilt. When you hurt someone, you offend them (even if you didn't do something wrong), or you sin in one way or another, you feel guilt. It's a God-given emotion that we have inside of our conscience that God uses to prompt us to go in the right direction. Make it right. That's why you want to go apologize to someone or you feel bad about it. That's guilt. Moving us in a right direction. Shame is different. Shame focuses on the person. You're a bad person. Guilt focuses on the activity. You did something wrong. Shame makes you feel unloved, unworthy, unacceptable. Guilt prompts a person to repentance and to change. Shame pushes you down. Guilt points something out that needs to change for good. Shame is an enemy. Guilt can be a friend.

So sometimes when people accuse us, they do it in a way that shames us. The devil wants to do that. He wants to shame you. He wants to accuse you. If you're a mom or a dad, you know this. If you got a teenage daughter... "You aren't going out of the house looking like that." Or you say to a guy, "You need to park your cell phone before you go to bed." And what do you get sometimes? You get all kinds of accusations. "I can't believe I live in the strictest home in the world. You hate me." And you get all that stuff. That's accusations that come. Accusations can come from a mate, they can come from work, they can come from anywhere. And in the midst of that you feel misunderstood. Don't you? You go this is not fair that I'm being accused this way.

Verse 29 – "*Now what have I done?*" said David. "*Can't I even speak?*" Now I want you to see what David does here. There's a secret to life right here that we've just got to stop and park in. Because if we get this one truth today we've got something that will last us our lifetime, let alone a week. Good stuff right here that happens.

I just want to see what he doesn't do. He doesn't defend himself, he doesn't justify himself, he doesn't blame anybody. He doesn't do any of that. He does one thing. Notice verse 30. *He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before.*

You've got to learn how to turn away. There's sometimes in life where turning away is the best response. Now we've got to see here in the passage he doesn't turn away from Goliath. There's certain battles you fight and certain battles you don't fight. When someone is just accusing you and you feel misunderstood, you're tempted to jump in and start arguing and defending yourself and so on.

This is sibling conflict going on. These guys are older, but you've got Eliab and David who are brothers. One is accusing the other of something. I help young people sometimes deal with sibling conflict. I say, "Your brother is good at pestering, isn't he?" "Yeah, he's really good at pestering me. He's really good at pestering me." I said, "Okay, well you just have to be better at ignoring that he is pestering. If you can get better at ignoring then his pestering is not going to bother you so much." That's what David does. He turns away. I just love those words. Sometimes you've just got to turn away.

Kids try to do this to their parents, right? You tell a child, "You're doing the wrong thing. You need to sit down, take a break, change your heart, and come back and see me when you're

ready.” And then the kids go there, but they’re saying all kinds of things. Mean things. Accusing things. Things that bait their parents to get involved in some kind of an argument. I tell parents this: Kids don’t like to be angry alone. They want company. So they send out invitations. Would you join me in my anger party? Parents RSVP – I’ll be right there – and they join the party. And now you’ve got two people yelling at each other, arguing with each other. Sometimes we just need to turn away.

I just love those words. *He turned away*. If I were going to write a book about the biggest lessons in life, one of them would be you’ve got to let it go. That’s a real important one because you know if you don’t let it go then it bothers you for months or weeks or days or hours or whatever. That’s one. We’re not talking about that one today. But another one is you’ve got to turn away. You’ve got to know when this is not the battle that we’re going to fight.

In essence what David is saying is, “Okay, I’m done talking to you. I’m going to find a supervisor here. I want to talk to someone who’s in charge. I want to get the answers that I want.” Sometimes you just have to turn away from the person who’s not giving the right stuff or is accusing you and leave them alone because it’s not worth the battle to fight that person. You’ve got to get the right person.

The last couple weeks I’ve been wrestling with Verizon. All I want is faster internet speed and a cheaper price. That’s not that big. Faster internet speed at a cheaper price. They advertise that! That’s all I want!

So I call up customer service. “I’d like faster internet speed at a cheaper price.”
“Oh sure, we can do that. It’s going to cost you \$150 to come out and rewire your outside lines.”
I said, “I don’t want to pay \$150. I just want faster speed at a cheaper price.”
“We can’t do that.”

I know I’m not talking to the right person. Do you ever feel that way when you’re talking to customer service? Because there’s two kinds of customer service people. There’s the rule people and there’s the customer service people. Rule people are the ones that say (and you should never say) this: “If we did this for you, we’d have to do this for everyone.” I don’t want to hear that. I want to hear that I’m special, valuable. That’s what I want to hear.

So I could argue with this lady, “This is not customer service.” I could argue with her, but when I get to that place in customer service where I’m talking to someone like this Verizon lady, I know I’m talking to the wrong person. Any further conversation is a waste of my time. I say, “Thank you very much. Talk to you later. Bye.” And I’m done.

Call right back. Get on hold again. Finally they answer.
“Hi, I would like faster internet service at a cheaper price.”
“Oh sure, that’s going to cost you \$150 to rewire your lines from the outside.”
I said, “Is there a way that I don’t have to pay the \$150?”
She says, “Hmm, let me check on that.” Ah, I’m talking to the right person! This is great!

She gets back on the line, “I just want to tell you there’s an online opportunity that you can go on and I think you can get it without paying the \$150.”

I said, “Well let me try that right now.” I’m going on there and I said, “No, they’re still wanting to charge me \$150.”

She says, “Well let me see what I can do.”

I’m going, “Yes! I’m talking to the right person.”

She gets back and she says, “I’ll tell you what I’ll do. They’re going to charge you the \$150. But I’ll refund the \$150 after the fact for you so you don’t have to pay for the \$150.” Now that’s customer service! I like that. I’m talking to the right person.

I’m telling you, there are some battles you don’t fight. If I stay on that phone and I start arguing with this person in the first place, what are they going to do? They’re trained to deal with people like me. They’re going to keep arguing with me. I’ve got to forget that and go on to something else.

There are some battles you don’t fight. If we can learn which battles to fight, we’ll be much stronger in life because those that accuse us and shame us are not the battles that we want to fight. We want to turn away from those and we want to appeal to the supervisor. I’ll tell you, you can go straight to the top and you can talk to the heavenly Father who’s the good, good Father who loves you and He isn’t going to accuse you, He isn’t going to attack you. You don’t want to be in that place where you’re attacked and accused. You’re going to get there because that’s part of being on the battlefield.

If you’re doing anything in life, you know you’re going to get criticized, right? Anybody who is trying to get anything done is going to get criticized. That’s just part of the job description. It’s okay. Don’t get hung up with that and let it ruin your day. David just says, “Fine, thank you. I’m going to go find a supervisor. I’m going to go talk to him and I’m going to move forward.” Wow. I just really like those words.

Here’s what happens. With these accusations, they are distractions in our lives. They hinder us from moving forward. I’m going to end this part of our sermon. This sermon is going to continue next week. I just couldn’t fit it all in. I usually have seven pages of notes, this time I had sixteen pages. I just knew you’d be here all day and we’d have another problem.

So I’m going to read you this passage from Proverbs 4:23-27 to help you see how this passage is forming our vision for how we need to stay focused. Get focused in life. Don’t get distracted by these things. Turn away. Know how to do it.

Proverbs 4:23-27 – Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Wow. That is powerful. Keep focused, stay going in the right direction, choose the battles to fight. Now David does have a battle to fight. He doesn't ignore the fact that he's going to fight a battle. There's some battles you fight and there's some you don't fight. But the ones you don't fight, you've got to learn how to walk away, turn away from them.

It's really interesting sometimes when you turn away from a child who's giving you a hard time. If you do back off instead of attack, it just changes the dynamic in the relationship. Sometimes they soften as well. God wants us to be close in our relationships. He wants us to have close family relationships, close friendships. Sometimes things get in the way of things that distract us from the primary goal of moving forward in the kingdom. That's what we want to do. Keep our eyes focused and know what the battles are that we're supposed to be fighting and not get distracted by those things around us that get us into trouble. God is able to fight the battles for us. He's the one who's strong, and we want to be able to trust in Him.

We've got a lot more. There's some really great stuff in this passage. That's why we're taking it in slow motion here and we're going to take two more principles of when we're attacked. We're going to look at those next week and see how David fought the battle. We're going to take those ideas and we're going to take them home and apply them in our lives so we can take Jesus home and come away from here with something that we can use.

I trust that God will use this particular truth in your life this week. You'll practice turning away, choosing your battles, finding your battles that are most important that God would have you to fight.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, I thank you that you are strong, that you are powerful. You are a God of possibilities. You turn beauty from ashes. Your mercies are new every morning. I pray for that one person here that needs hope today, who needs to be encouraged, who needs to recognize what you want to do inside of them and for them and through them. Lord, do that work today I ask. Father, as we have a prayer time now, we ask that you would do that work in each of our hearts, that we would dedicate ourselves to you in a new way. Reveal to us how you want us to change, how you want us to commit ourselves to you, and what focus we need to have in our lives this week. In Jesus' name, amen.