

HEROES

1 Samuel 17:4 ... “And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubit and a span.”

In today's verse we read of Goliath, the hero of the Philistines which was the main enemy of Israel. He was tall, wide and heavy. His armor, which weighed 57kg, was so large a normal man could not wear it. His weapons so heavy, a normal man could not wield them. The point of his spear weighed nearly 7 kg and it was on the end of a long and heavy staff. Yes, Goliath was a mighty man; not quite a giant, but at 3.2 meters tall, he was impressive and frightening. Goliath was a hero of the Philistines.

David was the youngest of eight boys and in charge of his family's sheep. While the army of Israel hid in fear from Goliath, David met the giant on the battlefield and killed him without any harm to himself. Goliath, the hero of the Philistines, fell and that caused them to lose the war and lose hope; the Philistine army fled in fear because of what David did. However, David did not fight Goliath alone or on his own terms. In verses 45-46 we read: “Then David said to the Philistine [Goliath], ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand...’” And, that's exactly what God did.

This week in the U.S. (and other countries) is the annual observance of the Islamic attack that killed nearly 3,000 innocent Americans in 2001. I well remember the terror of that event and the fear it instilled. Many people – police officers, fire fighters, military personnel and ordinary citizens – rose to the occasion and gave their own lives sacrificially to save others. In fact, many of the nearly 3,000 who died, were people who rushed in to save others. These are legitimate heroes, not the celebrities that people today often idolize.

The problem in making men and women your heroes, compared to those who genuinely earn the title due to their life-giving sacrifices, is that when they – athletes, actors and singers – fall, your hopes and confidence may also fall. There are countless modern-day stories of young people who fell into clinical depression or committed suicide because their hero – a popular singer, actor or athlete – was found guilty of a crime or merely died. When young people put so much confidence in celebrities that they become their heroes, there is guaranteed sadness and broken hearts on the horizon. And it is not only young people who idolize men. Adults idolize politicians and scam artists, athletes and actors, mythical beings and self-appointed pastors. Idolizing people will never result in your happiness or a positive self-image. People will eventually disappoint you and by trusting them with your happiness, you risk losing your peace of mind and compromising your faith in God. You may become so upset at the death of an idol, that you blame God for it.

If you want to model your life after someone, look to great men and women of God, such as the apostles of Jesus who were killed for their commitment to Him. Look to martyred Christians and missionaries who were killed for their unwavering faith. Look to your faithful grandmother or mother who prayed for you every day. Not only are these true heroes, but they were heroic for all the right reasons...they pleased and honored God.

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