

have proven yourself to have a character that looks to please God in the decisions you make. Then, all of this has worked to make you rely on the hope God has given you through Jesus Christ even more. And, based on the love Christ has shown for you, you must always recognize the hope that helps you endure through the trials of life and battles against your giants will not disappoint you when your life on this earth is over! For, the eternal home in Heaven will be worth facing your giants courageously and denying yourself of earthly pleasures and comforts!

**James 1:2-4.** Your past trials (the testing of your faith) have worked to produce greater endurance in your life if you have responded to them in God's way. You are stronger having been through them and are now better prepared to face your giants. And, as you have overcome these past obstacles, you have become more mature and complete in your faith and no longer lack what is needed to overcome! This recognition of how trials can make you stronger and better equipped to face your giants and future obstacles should cause you to actually rejoice while you are going through them. So, you can learn to be happy as you face your giants (regardless of how uncomfortable and challenging it is) because you know that doing so will make you even stronger for Jesus Christ in the future!

**2 Corinthians 1:3-7.** This passage demonstrates that your trials can help you help others overcome their trials. So, as you courageously and faithfully conquer your trials, you will be in a better position to help others do the same. Therefore, just as David continues to help you learn to defeat your giants, you can help others defeat their giants through your example and through your encouragement once you defeat them!

### Conclusion

Your past trials have worked to prepare you for the battles against your giants. But, you need to take some time to honestly reflect over your experiences and the lessons you have learned. Recognize how God has always given you a path to victory in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Recognize God has always been and will always be stronger than the giants you face. Then, have confidence that God has given you all you need to fight the battles against your giants at this moment!



As you think over all the battles you have faced in your life, there have almost certainly been times you have faced difficult situations and God gave you the strength to do what was right (i.e. made it through a hardship, resisted a temptation, denied yourself, trusted God in uncertain times, etc.). Focusing on these past victories should help you prepare to face your giants today. Then, you can also learn from your past losses – recognizing where such disobedience got you and that there was a path to victory available. Just as David's past trials prepared him to face Goliath (though he likely did not realize this when he faced them), your past trials will work in similar ways if you let them!

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how past trials prepare you for future battles by considering how David grew through past trials, how to view trials as training, and what your trials will produce.

### David Grew Through Past Trials

**David learned lessons throughout his life.** When David arrived at the battle against Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, he had been working as a shepherd (v. 15). Consider the lessons he would have learned in this role. For example, Psalm 23 is attributed to David. Particularly notice how he applied the ideas of shepherding (caring for, protecting, and leading) to the way God shepherds. So, David learned to trust God even when he was led through the deepest, darkest valley. David would not fear evil because he knew God was with him and would only lead him in the right ways, bless his life, and cause him to overcome his enemies! Then, David also surely learned lessons from his military experiences (1 Samuel 16:18, 21; though there is some question whether these things happened before or after the battle with Goliath).

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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**God delivered David from lions and bears.** David told King Saul about some of his experiences as a shepherd in 1 Samuel 17:34-36. While we are not given the details, David did not back down from these challenges against his flock. But, notice the greater application David made – as he focused not in his own strength and ability to kill lions and bears, but God being with him in those times (1 Samuel 17:37)!

**David applied his experiences to the battle before him.** Although King Saul questioned whether David was prepared for such a high-stakes battle against Goliath, David saw his past experiences as training for that moment (1 Samuel 17:36-37)! He saw these trials as growing experiences that helped him have the faith in God to fight against Goliath when every other Israelite soldier would not fight! Think about Psalm 23 from the perspective of David preparing to face Goliath. David had learned to trust in God as his Shepherd, trusting God would lead him in the right paths that were beneficial for him. So, even when others were retreating and David would enter the deepest and darkest valleys against the fiercest enemies, David knew God would still be with him and cause him to emerge victorious!

**David's victory over Goliath surely prepared him for future battles.** This fight against Goliath was not David's last battle. Think about how David's battles had escalated up to this point against Goliath. Then, after Goliath, David would face giants and challenges of other varieties – including fleeing from King Saul, enemy nations as the king of Israel, leading the kingdom, admitting his own sin (i.e. with Bathsheba), and fleeing and fighting his own son (Absalom). Although David may not have realized it at the time, facing Goliath surely helped prepare him for these challenges. I wonder how many times he thought about the way God delivered him from Goliath in these subsequent battles!

### Viewing Trials As Training

**Understanding trials.** Everyone will face trials in life (notice the “when,” not “if” in James 1:2). You should think of trials as tests – opportunities to prove whether you will faithfully serve God or act another way. These come in various forms. There are general hardships and challenges every person faces (i.e. deaths, injuries, diseases, natural disasters). There are temptations that appeal to your fleshly desires (James 1:14-15). There are persecutions of various sorts for living to please God (2 Timothy 3:12). And, there are trials involved in continuing to do what is right when you are discouraged (Galatians 6:9).

**The source of trials.** As you consider your past trials and your giants, consider where these trials come from. First, consider that God gives you tests and allows your faith to be tested. So, he gives you opportunities to prove and strengthen your faith, preparing you for future battles. Consider how God called Abraham and tested his faith (Genesis 12:1-4; Genesis 22:2-3). This demonstrates that God tests your faith by giving you opportunities to demonstrate that you really do trust Him (even when earthly circumstances are challenging). However, you can be certain that God *never* tries to make you sin (James 1:13).

Second, consider that God allows Satan to test your faith. These tests are called “temptations” (as Satan uses something that appeals to your physical desires to lure you away from God). Satan can use many different circumstances and people to lure you away from God (notice how Satan used Peter to tempt Jesus in Matthew 16:21-23). Whenever you experience any test, here is one thing you must remember: God wants the test to make you stronger; Satan wants to use it to defeat you! But, regardless of the test you face, be assured that God always provides a way for you to be victorious (1 Corinthians 10:13)!

**How past trials impact your future battles.** Every trial you face in your life is a battle. So, you should gain experience from all your previous battles. Even though they have not always been against your giants, they should help you confidently face your giants. You see, while your giants appear to threaten you in a greater way than other trials, the challenges are essentially no different than the other ones you have faced in life (i.e. they work the same way and God still provides a path to victory). Think about David again. Even though he recognized there were differences between the bear and lion and Goliath (i.e. size, number of people impacted), David also recognized how they were the same. Just as the past tests were tests of God versus those animals, the test with Goliath was a test of God versus the giant – and he recognized the same God who was bigger and stronger than the lion and bear was also still bigger and stronger than Goliath! In the same way, whether you have fought valiantly for God in the past or retreated, you should look back on them and learn valuable lessons applicable to your current challenges. See how God has always given you a path to victory. Learn from your mistakes. Be encouraged by past victories. Trust that God will cause you to be victorious!

### What Your Trials Will Produce

**Romans 5:1-5.** If you have responded to your past trials in God's ways, you now have a greater endurance for future trials. In addition, you