

# BIBLE STUDY METHODS

## Tell Me the Old, Old Story

This method helps to find fresh insights in familiar Bible stories. Select a familiar Bible story such as David and Goliath recorded in I Samuel 17.

### How to Start

Concentrate on one segment of the story at a time, one character, one symbol, one event, even one word or phrase that grabs your attention, especially if the story or life spans many chapters. You may think the story of David and Goliath is one event, but there are several segments that can be studied in depth using the following guidelines.

- David's arrival and confrontation with brothers (vv. 20-30)
- David and Saul's interaction (vv. 31-39)
- Equipped by God (v. 40)
- David meets Goliath (vv. 41-47)
- David's attack and victory (vv. 48-50)
- After the victory (vv.51-58)

### Questions to Ask

What changes do you see in one character from the beginning of the story to the end? David started out as a naïve shepherd boy but then became an errand boy who argued with his brothers. Is this the same David at the end of the story? What caused him to change? How about Saul? He seemed willing to help David at first but had a change of heart. What happened?

What general topics or problems does this story address and what specific lessons does it teach on the subject? Much is written in Scripture about faith, but what do you learn from David's faith, in particular? You can see that he used the gifts and tools he had at hand even when they appeared inadequate for the job. What about facing opposition? You learn the enemy is not always on the other side of the fence. Sometimes opposition crops up in our own camp, sometimes from well-intentioned teammates. To deepen your understanding of that segment of Scripture, study a particular phrase or topic using cross-references, a concordance, or other translations.

Consider a symbol in the story and how it applies to your life. For instance, Saul's armor leads me to ask, "What false reinforcements do I use in my life to face tough problems? Do I trust in my own might or God's?" Or, consider the five stones. Do they demonstrate a lack of faith on David's part? Why did he need five if God was fighting for him? Perhaps it's not a matter of, "What if I fall?" but a question of, "How many stones will it take to kill a giant, and am I prepared to do the best job?"

Ask anything and everything, then try to dig for answers: What made David different from every other Israelite man? How did God prepare David for this moment? What phrases show David's faith? Have I ever acted like David's brothers, or like Saul? How did David's mission change from the beginning of the story to the end?

Ask God to reveal His treasure to you as you study His Word. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5).

### **A Month of Stories to Study**

1. Adam and Eve (Gen 3)
2. Joseph sold into slavery (Gen 37, 42-45, 46:28-30)
3. Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Gen 39)
4. Moses and the burning bush (Ex 3)
5. Crossing the Red Sea (Ex 13:17-14:31)
6. Samuel and Eli (1 Sam 3)
7. David and Jonathan (1 Sam 19-20)
8. David and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11-12:25; Ps 51)
9. Esther (Es 2-6)
10. Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1)
11. Job's suffering (Job 1-2:10)
12. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 3)
13. Daniel in the lions den (Dan 6)
14. The birth of Jesus (Lk 1:26-2:40)
15. Jesus calms the storm (Mark 4:35-41)
16. Jesus feeds the 5000 (Mt 14:13-21)
17. Jesus walks on water (Jn 6:15-21)
18. Triumphal entry (Mt 21:1-11)
19. The Last Supper (Mk 14:12-26)
20. Judas's betrayal (Lk 22:47-53)
21. The Resurrection (Mt 27:62-28:15)
22. John the Baptist beheaded (Mt 13:47-52)
23. Peter walks on water (Mt 14:22-33)
24. Jesus heals the paralytic (Mt 9:1-8)
25. The prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32)
26. The woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42)
27. Jesus washes disciple's feet (Jn 13:1-17)
28. Stoning of Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60)
29. Saul's conversion (Acts 9:1-19)
30. Peter's escape from prison (Acts 12:1-19)